Fanny Reading the Journal to the Baron

Balzac, Vol. IV

THE FIRST COMPLETE TRANSLATION
INTO ENGLISH

# Honoré de Balzac

*IN TWENTY-FIVE VOLUMES*

## Beatrix

The Atheist's Mass
Honorine
Colonel Chabert
The Commission in Lunacy
Pierre Grassou

WITH A FRONTISPIECE IN PHOTOGRAVURE

VOLUME FOUR

P. F. COLLIER & SON
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# HONORÉ DE BALZAC

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# PREFACE

"Béatrix" was built up in the odd fashion in which Balzac sometimes did build up his novels, and which may be thought to account for an occasional lack of unity and grasp in them. The original book, written in 1838, and published with the rather flowery dedication "to Sarah" at the end of that year, stopped at the marriage of Calyste and Sabine. The last part, separately entitled "Un Adultère Rétrospectif," was not added till six years later. It cannot be said to be either very shocking or very unnatural that the young husband should exemplify the truth of that uncomfortable proverb, "Qui a bu boira"; and it is perhaps rather more surprising that Balzac should have allowed him to be "refished" (as the French say) in a finally satisfactory condition by his lawful spouse.

Still, I do not think the addition can be considered on the whole an improvement to the book, of which it is at the best rather an appendix than an integral part. The conception of Béatrix herself seems to have changed somewhat, and that not as the conception of her immortal namesake in "Esmond" and "The Virginians" changes, merely to suit the irreparable outrage of years. The end has unsavory details, which have not, as the repetition of them in more tragic form a little later in "La Cousine Bette" has, the justification of a really tragic retribution; and a man must have a great deal of disinterested good-nature about him to feel any satisfaction, or indeed to take much interest, in the restoration of the domestic happiness of two such persons as M. and Madame de Rochefide. Calyste du Guénic, whose character was earlier rather exaggerated, is now almost a caricature, and to

me at least the thing is not much excused by the fact that it gives Balzac an opportunity of introducing his pattern gentleman-scoundrel, Maxime de Trailles, and his pet Bohemian, La Palférine. The many-named Italian here indeed plays a comparatively benevolent part, as does Trailles; but they are both as great "raffs" and "tigers" as ever.

The first and larger part of the book, on the other hand —the book proper, as we may call it—is a remarkable, a well-designed, and a very interesting study. It is not so much of an additional attraction to me, as it perhaps is to most people, that contemporaries, without much contradiction, or in all cases improbability, chose to regard the parts and personages of Félicité des Touches, Béatrix de Rochefide, Claude Vignon, and the musician Conti, as designed, and pretty closely designed, after George Sand, Madame d'Agoult (known as "Daniel Stern"), Gustave Planche, the critic, and Liszt. As to the first pair, there can, of course, be no doubt; for Balzac, by representing "Camille Maupin" as George Sand's rival, and by introducing divers ingenious and legitimate adaptations of the famous she-novelist's career, both invites, and in a way authorizes, the attribution. There is nothing offensive in it; indeed, Félicité is one of the most effective and sympathetic of his female characters, and would always have been incapable of the rather heartless action by which the actual George Sand amused herself intellectually and sentimentally with lover after lover, and then threw them away. Unless the accounts of Planche that we have are very unfair—and they possibly are, for he was a critic, and was particularly obnoxious to the extreme Romantic school, which was perhaps why Balzac liked him—Claude Vignon is a still more flattered portrait, though Balzac's low, if not quite impartial, opinion of critics in general comes out in it. Conti may be fair enough for Liszt; and if Béatrix is certainly a libel on poor Madame d'Agoult, it must be remembered that this later Madame de Staël was generally misrepresented in her lifetime, though since her death she has had more justice.

The "key"-interest of books, however, is always a minor, and sometimes a purely illegitimate one. It ought to be sufficient for us that the interest of the quartet, even if there had been no such persons as George Sand, Daniel Stern, Planche, and Liszt in the world, would be very great, and that it is well composed with and maintained by the accessory and auxiliary facts and characters. The picture of the Guénic household (which, after Balzac's usual fashion, throws us back to "Les Chouans," while Béatrix as a Castéran, and thus a connection of the luckless Mlle. de Verneuil, is also connected with that book) may seem to some to be a little too fully painted; it does not seem so to me. Whether, as hinted above, the character of Calyste has its childishness exaggerated or not, I must leave to readers to decide for themselves. His casting of Béatrix into the sea, besides being illegal, may seem to some extravagant; but it must be remembered that Balzac was originally writing when the heyday of the Romantic movement was by no means over, and when Melodrama was still pretty fully in fashion. It is difficult, too, to see what better contrast and uniting scheme for the contrasted worldlinesses of the four chief characters could have been devised; while the childishness itself is not inconceivable or unnatural in a boy brought up in a sort of household of romance by a heroic father and a doting mother, both utterly unworldly, his head being further fired by participation in actual civil war on behalf of an injured princess, and his heart exposed without preparation to such different influences as those of Mlle. des Touches and of Béatrix.

The contrast of the two ladies is also fine; indeed, Béatrix seems to me, though by no means Balzac's most perfect work, to be an attempt in a higher style of novel writing than any other heroine of his. It is impossible not to suspect in Félicité, good, clever, and so forth as she is, a covert satire on the variety of womankind which had begun to be fashionable. The satire on the unamiable side of mere womanliness which the sketch of Béatrix contains is, of course, open and undeniable. I think that Thackeray has far excelled it, but

I am not certain that he was not indebted to it as a pattern. The fault of the French Béatrix has been expressed by her creator on nearly the last page of the book. A woman *sans cœur ni tête* may do a great deal of mischief; but she cannot quite play the part attributed to Madame de Rochefide.

The first two parts of "Béatrix" (in which Madame de Rochefide was at first called Roche*gude*) appeared in the "Siècle" during April and May, 1839, with the alternative title "ou les Amours Forcés," and they were published in book form by Souverain in the same year. They were then divided briefly: the first part, which was called "Moeurs D'Autrefois" in the "Siècle," and "Une Famille Patriarcale" in the book, had eight headed chapters; the second ("Moeurs d'Aujourdhui" in the first, "Une Femme Célèbre" in the second) eleven; and a third division, "Les Rivalités," eight. As a "Scène de la Vie Privée," which it became in 1842, it had no chapters; it was little altered otherwise; and the present completion was anticipated, though not given, in a final paragraph. It also had the simple title of "Béatrix." The completion itself did not appear till the midwinter (December-January) of 1844-45. It was first called "Les Petits Manèges d'une Femme Vertueuse" in the "Messager," and when, shortly afterward, it was published by Chlendowski as a book, "La Lune de Miel." In these forms it had fifty-nine headed chapters. In the same year, however, it became, with its forerunners, part of the "Comédie," and the chapters were swept away throughout.

# BÉATRIX

## TO SARAH

*In clear weather, on the Mediterranean shore, where formerly your name held elegant sway, the waves sometimes allow us to perceive beneath the mist of waters a sea-flower, one of Nature's masterpieces; the lacework of its tissue, tinged with purple, russet, rose, violet, or gold, the crispness of that living filigree, the velvet texture, all vanish as soon as curiosity draws it forth and spreads it on the strand.*

*Thus would the glare of publicity offend your tender modesty; so, in dedicating this work to you, I must reserve a name which would indeed be its pride. But under the shelter of this half-concealment, your superb hands may bless it, your noble brow may bend and dream over it, your eyes, full of motherly love, may smile upon it, since you are here at once present and veiled. Like that gem of the ocean-garden, you will dwell on the fine white level sand where your beautiful life expands, hidden by a wave that is transparent only to certain friendly and reticent eyes.*

*I would gladly have laid at your feet a work in harmony with your perfections; but as that was impossible, I knew, for my consolation, that I was gratifying one of your instincts by offering you something to protect.*

*De Balzac.*

# PART I

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

*FRANCE*, and more especially Brittany, still has some few towns that stand entirely outside the social movement which gives a character to the nineteenth century. For lack of rapid and constant communications with Paris, connected only by an ill-made road with the prefecture or chief town to which they belong, these places hear and see modern civilization pass by like a spectacle; they are amazed, but they do not applaud; and whether they fear it or make light of it, they remain faithful to the antiquated manners of which they preserve the stamp. Any one who should travel as a moral archæologist, and study men instead of stones, might find a picture of the age of Louis XV. in some village of Provence, that of the time of Louis XIV. in the depths of Poitou, that of yet remoter ages in the heart of Brittany.

Most of these places have fallen from some splendor of which history has kept no record, busied as it is with facts and dates rather than manners, but of which the memory still survives in tradition; as in Brittany, where the character of the people allows no forgetfulness of anything that concerns the home country. Many of these towns have been the capital of some little feudal territory—a county or a duchy conquered by the Crown, or broken up by inheritors in default of a direct male line. Then, deprived of their activity, these heads became arms; the arms, bereft of nutrition, have dried up and merely vegetate; and within these thirty years these images of remote times are beginning to die out and grow very rare.

Modern industry, toiling for the masses, goes on destroy-

ing the creations of ancient art, for its outcome was as personal to the purchaser as to the maker. We have *products* nowadays; we no longer have works. Buildings play a large part in the phenomena of retrospection; but to industry, buildings are stone-quarries or saltpetre mines, or storehouses for cotton. A few years more and these primitive towns will be transformed, known no more excepting in this literary iconography.

One of the towns where the physiognomy of the feudal ages is still most plainly visible is Guérande. The name alone will revive a thousand memories in the mind of painters, artists, and thinkers, who may have been to the coast, and have seen this noble gem of feudality proudly perched where it commands the sand-hills and the strand at low tide, the top corner, as it were, of a triangle at whose other points stand two not less curious relics—le Croisic and le Bourg de Batz. Besides Guérande there are but two places—Vitré, in the very centre of Brittany, and Avignon in the south—which preserve their medieval aspect and features intact in the midst of our century.

Guérande is to this day inclosed by mighty walls, its wide moats are full of water, its battlements are unbroken, its loopholes are not filled up with shrubs, the ivy has thrown no mantle over its round and square towers. It has three gates, where the rings may still be seen for suspending the portcullis; it is entered over drawbridges of timber shod with iron, which could be raised, though they are raised no longer. The municipality was blamed in 1820 for planting poplars by the side of the moat to shade the walk; it replied that on the land side, by the sand-hills, for above a hundred years, the fine long esplanade by the walls, which look as if they had been built yesterday, had been made into a mall overshadowed by elms, where the inhabitants took their pleasure.

The houses have known no changes; they are neither more nor less in number. Not one of them has felt on its face the hammer of the builder, or the brush of the white-

washer, nor trembled under the weight of an added story. They all retain their primitive character. Some are raised on wooden columns forming "rows," under which there is a footway, floored with planks that yield but do not break. The shop-dwellings are small and low, and faced with slate shingles. Woodwork, now decayed, has been largely used for carved window-frames; and the beams, prolonged beyond the pillars, project in grotesque heads, or at the angles, in the form of fantastic creatures, vivified by the great idea of Art, which at that time lent life to dead matter. These ancient things, defying the touch of time, offer to painters the brown tones and obliterated lines that they delight in.

The streets are what they were a hundred years ago. Only, as the population is thinner now, as the social stir is less active, a traveller curious to wander through this town, as fine as a perfect suit of antique armor, may find his way, not untouched by melancholy, down an almost deserted street, where the stone window-frames are choked with concrete to avoid the tax. This street ends at a postern-gate built up with a stone wall, and crowned by a clump of saplings planted there by the hand of Breton Nature—France can hardly show a more luxuriant and all-pervading vegetation. If he is a poet or a painter, our wanderer will sit down, absorbed in the enjoyment of the perfect silence that reigns under the still sharp-cut vaulting of this side gate, whither no sound comes from the peaceful town, whence the rich country may be seen in all its beauty through loopholes, once held by archers and cross-bowmen, which seem placed like the little windows arranged to frame a view from a summer-house.

It is impossible to go through the town without being reminded at every step of the manners and customs of long past times; every stone speaks of them; traditions of the Middle Ages survive there as superstitions. If by chance a gendarme passes in his laced hat, his presence is an anachronism against which the mind protests; but nothing is rarer than to meet a being or a thing of the present. There

is little to be seen even of the dress of the day; so much of it as the natives have accepted has become to some extent appropriate to their unchanging habits and hereditary physiognomy. The market-place is filled with Breton costumes, which artists come here to study, and which are amazingly varied. The whiteness of the linen clothes worn by the *paludiers*, the salt-workers who collect salt from the pans in the marshes, contrasts effectively with the blues and browns worn by the inland peasants, and the primitive jewelry piously preserved by the women. These two classes and the jacketed seamen, with their round varnished leather hats, are as distinct as the castes in India, and they still recognize the distinctions that separate the townsfolk, the clergy, and the nobility. Here every landmark still exists; the revolutionary plane found the divisions too rugged and too hard to work over; it would have been notched if not broken. Here the immutability which Nature has given to zoölogical species is to be seen in men. In short, even since the revolution of 1830, Guérande is still a place unique, essentially Breton, fervently Catholic, silent, meditative, where new ideas can scarcely penetrate.

Its geographical position accounts for this singularity. This pretty town overlooks the salt marshes; its salt is indeed known throughout Brittany as *Sel de Guérande*, and to its merits many of the natives ascribe the excellence of their butter and sardines. It has no communication with the rest of France but by two roads, one leading to Savenay, the chief town of the immediate district, and thence to Saint-Nazaire; and the other by Vannes on to Morbihan. The district road connects it with Nantes by land; that by Saint-Nazaire and then by boat also leads to Nantes. The inland road is used only by the Government, the shorter and more frequented way is by Saint-Nazaire. Between that town and Guérande lies a distance of at least six leagues, which the mails do not serve, and for a very good reason —there are not three travellers by coach a year. Saint-Nazaire is divided from Paimbœuf by the estuary of the

Loire, there four leagues in width. The bar of the river makes the navigation by steamboat somewhat uncertain; and to add to the difficulties, there was, in 1829, no landing quay at the cape of Saint-Nazaire; the point ended in slimy shoals and granite reefs, the natural fortifications of its picturesque church, compelling arriving voyagers to fling themselves and their baggage into boats when the sea was high, or, in fine weather, to walk across the rocks as far as the jetty then in course of construction. These obstacles, ill suited to invite the amateur, may perhaps still exist there. In the first place, the authorities move but slowly; and then the natives of this corner of land, which you may see projecting like a tooth on the map of France between Saint-Nazaire, le Bourg de Batz, and le Croisic, are very well content with the hindrances that protect their territory from the incursions of strangers.

Thus flung down on the edge of a continent, Guérande leads no whither, and no one ever comes there. Happy in being unknown, the town cares only for itself. The centre of the immense produce of the salt marshes, paying not less than a million francs in taxes, is at le Croisic, a peninsular town communicating with Guérande across a tract of shifting sands, where the road traced each day is washed out each night, and by boats indispensable for crossing the inlet which forms the port of le Croisic, and which encroaches on the sand. Thus this charming little town is a Herculaneum of feudalism, *minus* the winding sheet of lava. It stands, but is not alive; its only reason for surviving is that it has not been pulled down.

If you arrive at Guérande from le Croisic, after crossing the tract of salt marshes, you are startled and excited at the sight of this immense fortification, apparently quite new. Coming on it from Saint-Nazaire, its picturesque position and the rural charm of the neighborhood are no less fascinating. The country round it is charming, the hedges full of flowers—honeysuckles, roses, and beautiful shrubs; you might fancy it was an English wild garden

planned by a great artist. This rich landscape, so home-like, so little visited, with all the charm of a clump of violets or lily-of-the-valley found in the midst of a forest, is set in an African desert shut in by the ocean—a desert without a tree, without a blade of grass, without a bird, where, on a sunny day, the marshmen, dressed all in white, and scattered at wide intervals over the dismal flats where the salt is collected, look just like Arabs wrapped in their burnouse. Indeed, Guérande, with its pretty scenery inland, and its desert bounded on the right by le Croisic and on the left by Batz, is quite unlike anything else to be seen by the traveller in France. The two types of nature so strongly contrasted and linked by this last monument of feudal life, are quite indescribably striking. The town itself has the effect on the mind that a soporific has on the body; it is as soundless as Venice.

There is no public conveyance but that of a carrier who transports travellers, parcels, and possibly letters, in a wretched vehicle, from Saint-Nazaire to Guérande or back again. Bernus, the driver of this conveyance, was, in 1829, the factotum of the whole community. He goes as he likes, the whole country knows him, he does everybody's commissions. The arrival of a carriage is an immense event—some lady who is passing through Guérande by the land road to le Croisic, or a few old invalids on their way to take sea-baths, which among the rocks of this peninsula have virtues superior to those of Boulogne, Dieppe, or les Sables. The peasants come on horseback, and for the most part bring in their produce in sacks. They come hither chiefly, as do the salt makers, for the business of purchasing the jewelry peculiar to their caste, which must always be given to Breton maidens on betrothal, and the white linen or the cloth for their clothes. For ten leagues round, Guérande is still that illustrious Guérande where a treaty was signed famous in French history; the key of the coast, displaying no less than le Bourg de Batz a magnificence now lost in the darkness of

ages. The jewelry, the cloth, the linen, the ribbons, and hats are manufactured elsewhere, but to the purchasers they are the specialty of Guérande.

Every artist, nay, and every one who is not an artist, who passes through Guérande, feels a desire—soon forgotten—to end his days in its peace and stillness, walking out in fine weather on the mall that runs round the town from one gate to the other on the seaward side. Now and again a vision of this town comes to knock at the gates of memory; it comes in crowned with towers, belted with walls; it displays its robe strewn with lovely flowers, shakes its mantle of sand-hills, wafts the intoxicating perfumes of its pretty thorn-hedged lanes, decked with posies lightly flung together; it fills your mind, and invites you like some divine woman whom you have once seen in a foreign land, and who has made herself a home in your heart.

Close to the church of Guérande a house may be seen which is to the town what the town is to the country, an exact image of the past, the symbol of a great thing now gone, a poem. This house belongs to the noblest family in the land—that of du Guaisnic, who, in the time of the du Guesclin, were as superior to them in fortune and antiquity as the Trojans were to the Romans. The Guaisqlain (also formerly spelled du Glaicquin)—which has become Guesclin—are descended from the Guaisnics. The Guaisnics, as old as the granite of Brittany, are neither Franks nor Gauls; they are Bretons, or, to be exact, Celts. Of old they must have been Druids, have cut the mistletoe in sacred groves, and have sacrificed men on dolmens. Today this race, the equals of the Rohans, but never choosing to be made Princes, powerful in the land before Hugues Capet's ancestors had been heard of, this family, pure from every alloy, is possessed of about two thousand francs a year, this house at Guérande, and the little Castle of le Guaisnic. All the estates belonging to the Barony of le Guaisnic, the oldest in Brittany, are in the hands

of farmers, and bring in about sixty thousand francs a year in spite of defective culture. The du Guaisnics are indeed still the owners of the land; but as they cannot pay up the capital deposited with them two hundred years ago by those who then held them, they cannot take the income. They are in the position of the French Crown toward its tenants in 1789. When and where could the Barons find the million francs handed over to them by their farmers? Until 1789 the tenure of the fiefs held of the Castle of le Guaisnic, which stands on a hill, was still worth fifty thousand francs; but by a single vote the National Assembly suppressed the fines on leases and sales paid to the feudal lords. In such circumstances, this family, no longer of any consequence in France, would be a subject of ridicule in Paris; at Guérande it is an epitome of Brittany. At Guérande the Baron du Guaisnic is one of the great barons of France, one of the men above whom there is but one—the King of France, chosen of old to be their chief. In these days the name of du Guaisnic—full of local meanings, of which the etymology has been explained in "Les Chouans or Brittany in 1799"—has undergone the same change as disfigures that of du Guaisqlain. The tax-collector, like every one else, writes it Guénic.

At the end of a silent, damp, and gloomy alley, formed by the gabled fronts of the neighboring houses, the arch of a door in the wall may be seen, high and wide enough to admit a horseman, which is in itself sufficient evidence of the house having been finished at a time when carriages as yet were not. This arch, raised on jambs, is all of granite. The door, made of oak, has cracked like the bark of the trees that furnished the timber, and is set with enormous nails in a geometrical pattern. The arch is coved, and displays the coat-of-arms of the du Guaisnics, as sharp and clean-cut as though the carver had but just finished it. This shield would delight an amateur of heraldry by its simplicity, testifying to the pride and the antiquity of the family. It is still the same as on the day when the

crusaders of the Christian world invented these symbols to know each other by; the Guaisnics have never quartered their bearings with any others. It is always true to itself, like the arms of France, which heralds may recognize borne in chief or quarterly in the coats of the oldest families. This is the blazon, as you still may see it at Guérande: Gules, a hand proper manched ermine holding a sword argent in pale, with this tremendous motto, *Fac.* Is not that a fine and great thing? The wreath of the baronial coronet surmounts this simple shield, on which the vertical lines, used, instead of color, to represent *gules*, are still clear and sharp.

The sculptor has given an indescribable look of pride and chivalry to the hand. With what vigor does it hold the sword which has done the family service only yesterday! Indeed, if you should go to Guérande after reading this story, you will not look at that coat-of-arms without a thrill. The most determined Republican cannot fail to be touched by the fidelity, the nobleness, and the dignity buried at the bottom of that narrow street. The du Guaisnics did well yesterday; they are ready to do well to-morrow. *To do* is the great word of chivalry. "You did well in the fight," was always the praise bestowed by the High Constable *par excellence*, the great du Guesclin, who for a while drove the English out of France. The depth of the carving, protected from the weather by the projecting curved margin of the arch, seems in harmony with the deeply graven moral of the motto in the spirit of this family. To those who know the Guaisnics this peculiarity is very pathetic.

The open door reveals a fairly large courtyard with stables to the right and kitchen offices to the left. The house is built of squared stone from cellar to garret. The front to the courtyard has a double flight of outside steps; the decorated landing at the top is covered with vestiges of sculpture much injured by time; but the eye of the antiquarian can still distinguish in the centrepiece of the principal ornament the hand holding the sword. Below this elegant balcony, graced

with moldings now broken in many places, and polished here and there by long use, is a little lodge, once occupied by a watch-dog. The stone balustrade is disjointed, and weeds, tiny flowers, and mosses sprout in the seams and on the steps, which ages have dislodged without destroying their solidity. The door into the house must have been pretty in its day. So far as the remains allow us to judge, it must have been wrought by an artist trained in the great Venetian school of the thirteenth century; it shows a singular combination of the Mauresque and Byzantine styles, and is crowned by a semicircular bracket, which is overgrown with plants, a posy of rose, yellow, brown, or blue, according to the season. The door, of nail-studded oak, opens into a vast hall, beyond which is a similar door leading to such another balcony, and steps down into the garden.

This hall is in wonderful preservation. The wainscot, up to the height of a man's elbow, is in chestnut wood; the walls above are covered with splendid Spanish leather stamped in relief, its gilding rubbed and rusty. The ceiling is coffered, artistically molded, painted, and gilt, but the gold is scarcely visible; it is in the same condition as that on the Cordova leather; a few red flowers and green leaves can still be seen. It seems probable that cleaning would revive the paintings, and show them to be like those which decorate the woodwork of the House at Tours, called *la Maison de Tristan*, which would prove that they had been restored or repaired in the time of Louis XI. The fireplace is enormous, of carved stone, with huge wrought-iron dogs of the finest workmanship. They would carry a cartload of logs. All the seats in this hall are of oak, and have the family shield carved on their backs. Hanging to nails on the wall are three English muskets, fit alike for war or for sport, three cavalry swords, two game-bags, and various tackle for hunting and fishing.

On one side is the dining-room, communicating with the kitchen by a door in a corner turret. This turret corresponds with another in the general design of the front, containing

a winding-stair up to the two stories above. The dining-room is hung with tapestries dating from the fourteenth century; the style and spelling of the legends on ribbons below each figure prove their antiquity; but as they are couched in the frank language of the *Fabliaux* they cannot be transcribed here. These pieces, which are well preserved in the corners where the light has not faded them, are set in frames of carved oak now as black as ebony. The ceiling is supported on beams carved with foliage, and all different; the flats between are of painted wood, wreaths of flowers on a blue ground. Two old dressers with cupboards face each other; and on the shelves, rubbed with Breton perseverance by Mariotte the cook, may be seen now—as at the time when kings were quite as poor in 1200 as the du Guaisnics in 1830—four old goblets, an ancient soup-tureen, and two salt-cellars in silver, a quantity of metal plates, a number of blue and gray stoneware jugs with arabesque designs and the du Guaisnic arms, and crowned with hinged metal lids.

The fireplace has been modernized; its state shows that since the last century this has been the family sitting-room. It is of carved stone in the Louis XV. style, surmounted by a mirror framed in a beaded and gilt molding. This anachronism, to which the family is indifferent, would grieve a poet. On the shelf, covered with red velvet, there stands in the middle a clock of tortoise-shell, inlaid with brass, flanked by a pair of silver candelabra of strange design. A large table on heavy twisted legs stands in the middle of the room; the chairs are of turned wood, covered with tapestry. A round table with a centre leg and claw carved to represent a vine-stock stands in front of the window to the garden, and on it stands a quaint lamp. This lamp is formed of a globe of common glass, rather smaller than an ostrich's egg, held in a candlestick by a glass knob at the bottom. From an opening at the top comes a flat wick in a sort of brass nozzle; the plait of cotton, curled up like a worm in a phial, is fed with nut oil from the glass vessel. The window looking out on the garden, like that on the courtyard—for they are alike

—has stone mullions and hexagon panes set in lead; they are hung with curtains and valances, decorated with heavy tassels of an old-fashioned stuff—red silk shot with yellow, formerly known as brocatelle or damask.

Each floor of the house—there are but two below the attics—consists of only two rooms. The first floor was of old inhabited by the head of the family; the second was given up to the children; guests were lodged in the attic rooms. The servants were housed over the kitchens and stables. The sloping roof, leaded at every angle, has to the front and back alike a noble dormer window with a pointed arch, almost as high as the ridge of the roof, supported on graceful brackets; but the carving of the stone is worn and eaten by the salt vapor of the atmosphere. Above the windows, divided into four by mullions of carved stone, the aristocratic weathercock still creaks as it veers.

A detail, precious by its originality, and not devoid of merit in the eyes of the archæologist, must not be overlooked. The turret containing the winding stairs finishes the angle of a broad gabled wall in which there is no window. The stairs go down to a small arched door, opening on a sandy plot dividing the house from the outer wall which forms the back of the stables. The turret is repeated at the corner of the garden front; but instead of being circular, this turret has five angles and a hemispherical dome; also, it is crowned by a little belfry instead of carrying a conical cap like its sister. This is how those elegant architects lent variety to symmetry. On the level of the first floor these turrets are connected by a stone balcony, supported by brackets like prows with human heads. This outside gallery has a balustrade wrought with marvellous elegance and finish. Then from the top of the gable, below which there is a single small loophole, falls an ornamental stone canopy, like those which are seen over the heads of saints in a cathedral porch. Each turret has a pretty little doorway under a pointed arch, opening on to this balcony. Thus did the architects of the thirteenth century turn to account the bare, cold wall which

is presented to us in modern times by the end section of a house.

Cannot you see a lady walking on this balcony in the morning, and looking out over Guérande to where the sun sheds a golden light on the sands, and is mirrored in the race of the ocean? Do you not admire this wall with its finial and gable, furnished at its corners with these reedlike turrets—one suddenly rounded off like a swallow's nest, the other displaying its little door and Gothic arch decorated with the hand and sword?

The other end of the Hotel du Guaisnic joins on to the next house.

The harmony of effect so carefully aimed at by the builders of that period is preserved in the front to the courtyard by the turret corresponding to that containing the winding stair or *vyse*, an old word derived from the French *vis*. It serves as a passage from the dining-room to the kitchen, but it ends at the first floor, and is capped by a little cupola on pillars covering a blackened statue of Saint Calixtus.

The garden is sumptuous within its ancient inclosure; it is more than half an acre in extent, and the walls are covered with fruit-trees; the square beds for vegetables are marked out by standards, and kept by a manservant named Gasselin, who also takes charge of the horses. At the bottom of the garden is an arbor with a bench under it. In the midst stands a sundial. The paths are gravelled.

The garden front has no second turret to correspond with that at the corner of the gable; to make up for this there is a column with a spiral twist from bottom to top, which of old must have borne the standard of the family, for it ends in a large rusty iron socket in which lank weeds are growing. This ornament, harmonizing with the remains of stonework, shows that the building was designed by a Venetian architect; this elegant standard is like a sign-manual left by Venice, and revealing the chivalry and refinement of the thirteenth century. If there could still be any doubt, the

character of the details would remove them. The trefoils of the Guaisnic house have four leaves. This variant betrays the Venetian school debased by its trade with the East, since the semi-Mauresque architects, indifferent to Catholic symbolism, gave the trefoil a fourth leaf, while Christian architects remained faithful to the emblem of the Trinity. From this point of view Venetian inventiveness was heretical.

If this house moves you to admiration, you will wonder, perhaps, why the present age never repeats these miracles of art. In our day such fine houses are sold and pulled down, and make way for streets. Nobody knows whether the next generation will keep up the ancestral home, where each one abides as in an inn; whereas formerly men labored. or at least believed that they labored, for an eternal posterity, Hence the beauty of their houses. Faith in themselves worked wonders, as much as faith in God.

With regard to the arrangement and furniture of the upper stories, they can only be imagined from this description of the ground floor, and from the appearance and habits of the family. For the last fifty years the du Guaisnics have never admitted a visitor into any room but these two, which, like the courtyard and the external features of the house, are redolent of the grace, the spirit, and originality of the noble province of old Brittany.

Without this topography and description of the town, without this detailed picture of their home, the singular figures of the family dwelling there might have been less well understood. The frame was necessarily placed before the portraits. Every one must feel that mere things have an effect on people. There are buildings whose influence is visible on the persons who live near them. It is difficult to be irreligious under the shadow of a cathedral like that of Bourges. The soul that is constantly reminded of its destiny by imagery finds it less easy to fall short of it. So thought our ancestors, but the opinion is no longer held by a generation which has neither symbols nor distinctions, while its manners change every ten years. Do you not expect to find

the Baron du Guaisnic, sword in hand—or all this picture will be false?

In 1836, when this drama opens, in the early days of August, the family consisted still of Monsieur and Madame du Guénic, of Mademoiselle du Guénic, the Baron's elder sister, and of a son aged one-and-twenty, named Gaudebert-Calyste-Louis, in obedience to an old custom in the family. His father's name was Gaudebert-Calyste-Charles. Only the last name was ever changed; Saint-Gaudebert and Saint-Calixtus were always the patrons of the Guénics.

The Baron du Guénic had gone forth from Guérande as soon as la Vendée and Brittany had taken up arms, and he had fought with Charette, with Catelineau, La Rochejaquelein, d'Elbée, Bonchamps, and the Prince de Loudon. Before going, he had sold all his possessions to his elder sister, Mademoiselle Zéphirine du Guénic, a stroke of prudence unique in Revolutionary annals. After the death of all the heroes of the West, the Baron, preserved by some miracle from ending as they did, would not yield to Napoleon. He fought on till 1802, when, having narrowly escaped capture, he came back to Guérande, and from Guérande went to le Croisic, whence he sailed to Ireland—faithful to the traditional hatred of the Bretons for England.

The good people of Guérande pretended not to know that the Baron was alive; during twenty years not a word betrayed him. Mademoiselle de Guénic collected the rents, and sent the money to her brother through the hands of fishermen.

In 1813, Monsieur du Guénic came back to Guérande with as little fuss as if he had been spending the summer at Nantes. During his sojourn in Dublin, in spite of his fifty years, the Breton noble had fallen in love with a charming Irish girl, the daughter of one of the oldest and poorest houses of that unhappy country. Miss Fanny O'Brien was at that time one-and-twenty. The Baron du Guénic came to fetch the papers needed for his marriage, went back to be married, and returned ten months later, at the beginning

of 1814, with his wife, who gave birth to a son on the very day when Louis XVIII. landed at Calais—which accounts for the name of Louis.

The loyal old man was now seventy-three years old, but the guerilla warfare against the Republic, his sufferings during five sea voyages in open boats, and his life at Dublin, had all told on him; he looked more than a hundred. Hence, never had there been a Guénic whose appearance was in more perfect harmony with the antiquity of the house built at a time when a Court was held at Guérande.

Monsieur du Guénic was a tall old man, upright, shrivelled, strongly knit, and lean. His oval face was puckered by a thousand wrinkles, forming arched fringes above the cheekbones and eyebrows, giving his face some resemblance to those of the old men painted with such a loving brush by Van Ostade, Rembrandt, Miéris, and Gerard Dow — heads that need a magnifying glass to show their finish. His countenance was buried, as it were, under these numerous furrows produced by an open-air life, by the habit of scanning the horizon in the sunshine, at sunrise, and at the fall of day. But the sympathetic observer could still discern the imperishable forms of the human face, which always speak to the soul even when the eye sees no more than a death's head. The firm modelling of the features, the high brow, the sternness of outline, the severe nose, the form of the bones which wounds alone can alter, expressed disinterested courage, boundless faith, implicit obedience, incorruptible fidelity, unchanging affection. In him the granite of Brittany was made man.

The Baron had no teeth. His lips, once red, but now blue, were supported only by the hardened gums with which he ate the bread his wife took care first to soften by wrapping it in a damp cloth, and they were sunk in his face while preserving a proud and threatening smile. His chin aimed at touching his nose; but the character of that nose —high in the middle—showed his Breton vigor and power of resistance. His complexion, marbled with red that

showed through the wrinkles, was that of a full-blooded, high-tempered man, able to endure the fatigues which had often, no doubt, saved him from apoplexy. The head was crowned with hair as white as silver, falling in curls on his shoulders. This face, that seemed partly extinct, still lived by the brightness of a pair of black eyes, sparkling in their dark, sunken sockets, and flashing with the last fires of a generous and loyal soul. The eyebrows and eyelashes were gone. The skin had set, and would not yield; the difficulty of shaving compelled the old man to grow a fan-shaped beard.

What a painter would most have admired in this old lion of Brittany, with his broad shoulders and sinewy breast, was the hands, splendid soldier's hands—hands such as du Guesclin's must have been, broad, firm and hairy; the hands that had seized the sword never to relinquish it—any more than Joan of Arc's—till the day when the royal standard floated in the Cathedral at Rheims; hands that had often streamed with blood from the thorns of the *Bocage*—the thickets of la Vendée—that had pulled the oar in the Marais to steal upon the "blues," or on the open sea to help Georges to land; the hands of a partisan and of a gunner, of a private and of a captain; hands that were now white, though the Bourbons of the elder branch were in exile; but if you looked at them, you could see certain recent marks revealing that the Baron, not so long ago, had joined MADAME in la Vendée, since the truth may now be told. These hands were a living commentary on the noble motto to which no Guénic had ever been false, "*Fac!*"

The forehead attracted attention by the golden tone on the temples, in contrast with the tan of that narrow, hard, set brow to which baldness had given height enough to add majesty to the noble ruin. The whole countenance, somewhat unintellectual it must be owned—and how should it be otherwise?—had, like the other Breton faces grouped about it, a touch of savagery, a stolid calm, like the impassibility of Huron Indians, an indescribable stupidity, due perhaps

to the complete reaction that follows on excessive fatigue when the animal alone is left evident. Thought was rare there; it was visibly an effort; its seat was in the heart rather than the head; and its outcome was action rather than an idea. But on studying this fine old man with sustained attention, the mystery could be detected of this practical antagonism to the spirit of the age. His feelings and beliefs were, so to speak, intuitive, and saved him all thought. He had learned his duties by dint of living. Religion and Institutions thought for him. Hence he and his kindred reserved their powers of mind for action, without frittering them on any of the things they thought useless, though others considered them important. He brought his thought out of his mind as he drew his sword from the scabbard, dazzling with rectitude like the hand in its ermine sleeve on his coat-of-arms. As soon as this secret was understood everything was clear. It explained the depth of the resolutions due to clear, definite, loyal ideas, as immaculate as ermine. It accounted for the sale to his sister before the war, though to him it had meant everything—death, confiscation, exile. The beauty of these two old persons' characters—for the sister lived only in and for her brother—cannot be fully appreciated by the selfish habits which lie at the root of the uncertainty and changefulness of our day. An archangel sent down to read their hearts would not have found in them a single thought bearing the stamp of self. In 1814, when the priest of Guérande hinted to Baron du Guénic that he should go to Paris to claim his reward, the old sister, though avaricious for the family, exclaimed:

"Shame! Need my brother go begging like a vagrant?"

"It would be supposed that I had served the King from interested motives," said the old man. "Besides, it is his business to remember. And, after all, the poor King has enough to do with all who are harassing him. If he were to give France away piecemeal, he would still be asked for more."

This devoted servant, who cared so loyally for Louis XVIII., received a colonelcy, the Cross of Saint-Louis, and a pension of two thousand francs.

"The King has remembered!" he exclaimed, on receiving his letters patent.

No one undeceived him. The business had been carried through by the Duc de Feltre from the lists of the Army of la Vendée, in which he found the name of du Guénic with a few other Breton names ending in *ic*.

And so, in gratitude to the King, the Baron stood a siege at Guérande in 1815 against the forces of General Travot; he would not surrender the stronghold; and when he was compelled to evacuate, he made his escape into the woods with a party of Chouans, who remained under arms till the second return of the Bourbons. Guérande still preserves the memory of this last siege. If the old Breton trainbands had but joined, the war begun by this heroic resistance would have fired the whole of la Vendée.

It must be confessed that the Baron du Guénic was wholly illiterate—as illiterate as a peasant; he could read, write, and knew a little of arithmetic; he understood the art of war and heraldry; but he had not read three books in his life besides his prayer-book.

His dress, a not unimportant detail, was always the same; it consisted of heavy shoes, thick woollen stockings, velvet breeches of a greenish hue, a cloth waistcoat, and a coat with a high collar, on which hung the Cross of Saint-Louis.

Beautiful peace rested on this countenance, which, for a year past, frequent slumber, the precursor of death, seemed to be preparing for eternal rest. This constant sleepiness, increasing day by day, did not distress his wife, nor his now blind sister, nor his friends, whose medical knowledge was not great. To them these solemn pauses of a blameless but weary soul were naturally accounted for—the Baron had done his duty. This told all.

In this house the predominant interest centred in the fate of the deposed elder branch. The future of the exiled Bour-

bons and the Catholic religion, and the influence of the new politics on Brittany, exclusively absorbed the Baron's family. No other interest mingled with these but the affection they all felt for the son of the house, Calyste, the heir and only hope of the great name of du Guénic. The old Vendéen, the old Chouan, had known a sort of renewal of his youth a few years since, to give his son the habit of those athletic exercises that befit a gentleman who may be called upon to fight at any moment. As soon as Calyste reached the age of sixteen, his father had gone out with him in the woods and marshes, teaching him by the pleasures of sport the rudiments of war, preaching by example, resisting fatigue, steadfast in the saddle, sure of his aim, whatever the game might be, ground game or birds, reckless in overcoming obstacles, inciting his son to face danger as though he had ten children to spare. .

Then, when the Duchesse de Berry came to France to conquer the kingdom, the father carried off his son to make him act on the family motto. The Baron set out in the night without warning his wife, who might perhaps have displayed her emotion, leading his only child under fire as if it were to a festival, and followed by Gasselin, his only vassal, who rode forth gleefully. The three men of the house were away for six months, without sending any news to the Baroness—who never read the "Quotidienne" without quaking over every line—nor to her old sister-in-law, heroically upright, whose brow never flinched as she listened to the paper. So the three muskets hanging in the hall had seen service recently. The Baron, in whose opinion this call to arms was unavailing, had left the field before the fight at la Penissière, otherwise the race of Guénic might have become extinct.

When, one night of dreadful weather, the father, son, and servingman had reached home after taking leave of MADAME, surprising their friends, the Baroness and old Mademoiselle du Guénic—though she, by a gift bestowed on all blind people, had recognized the steps of three men

in the little street—the Baron looked round on the circle of his anxious friends gathered round the little table lighted up by the antique lamp, and merely said, in a quavering voice, while Gasselin hung up the muskets and swords in their place, these words of feudal simplicity:

"Not all the Barons did their duty."

Then he kissed his wife and sister, sat down in his old armchair, and ordered supper for his son, himself, and Gasselin. Gasselin, having screened Calyste with his body, had received a sabre cut on his shoulder; such a small matter that he was scarcely thanked for it.

Neither the Baron nor his guests uttered a curse or a word of abuse of the conquerors. This taciturnity is a characteristically Breton trait. In forty years no one had ever heard a contemptuous speech from the Baron as to his adversaries. They could but do their business, as he did his duty. Such stern silence is an indication of immutable determination.

This last struggle, the flicker of exhausted powers, had resulted in the weakness under which the Baron was now failing. The second exile of the Bourbons, as miraculously ousted as they had been miraculously restored, plunged him in bitter melancholy.

At about six in the evening, on the day when the scene opens, the Baron, who, according to old custom, had done his dinner by four o'clock, had gone to sleep while listening to the reading of the "Quotidienne." His head rested against the back of his armchair by the fireside, at the garden end.

The Baroness, sitting on one of the old chairs in front of the fire, by the side of this gnarled trunk of an ancient tree, was of the type of those adorable women which exist nowhere but in England, Scotland, or Ireland. There only do we find girls kneaded with milk, golden-haired, with curls twined by angels' fingers, for the light of heaven seems to ripple over their tendrils with every air that fans

them. Fanny O'Brien was one of those sylphs, strong in tenderness, invincible in misfortune, as sweet as the music of her voice, as pure as the blue of her eyes, elegantly lovely and refined, with the prettiness and the exquisite flesh—satin to the touch and a joy to the eye—that neither pencil nor pen can do justice to. Beautiful still at forty-two, many a man would have been happy to marry her as he looked at the charms of this glorious, richly-toned autumn, full of flower and fruit, and renewed by dews from heaven. The Baroness held the newspaper in a hand soft with dimples, and turned-up finger-tips with squarely cut nails like those of an antique statue. She leaned back in her chair, without awkwardness or affectation, her feet thrust forward to get warm; and she wore a black velvet dress, for the wind had turned cold these last few days. The bodice, fitting tight to the throat, covered shoulders of noble outline and a bosom which had suffered no disfigurement from having nursed an only child. Her hair fell in ringlets on each side of her face, close to her cheeks, in the English fashion; a simple twist on the top of her head was held by a tortoise-shell comb; and the mass, instead of being of a doubtful hue, glittered in the light like threads of brownish gold. She had made a plait of the loose short hairs that grow low down and are a mark of fine breeding. This tiny tress, lost in the rest of her hair that was combed high on her head, allowed the eye to note with pleasure the flowing line from her neck to her beautiful shoulders. This little detail shows the care she always gave to her toilet. She persisted in charming the old man's eye. What a delightful and touching attention!

When you see a woman lavishing in her home life the care for appearance which other women find for one feeling only, you may be sure that she is a noble mother, as she is a noble wife, the joy and flower of the household; she understands her duties as a woman, the elegance of her appearance dwells in her soul and her affections, she does good in secret, she knows how to love truly without ulterior mo-

tives, she loves her neighbor as she loves God, for himself. And it really seemed as though the Virgin in Paradise, under whose protection she lived, had rewarded her chaste girlhood and saintly womanhood by the side of the noble old man by throwing over her a sort of glory that preserved her from the ravages of time.

Plato would perhaps have honored the fading of her beauty as so much added grace. Her skin, once so white, had acquired those warm and pearly tones that painters delight in. Her forehead, broad and finely molded, seemed to love the light that played on it with sheeny touches. Her eyes of turquoise blue gleamed with wonderful softness under light velvety lashes. The drooping lids and pathetic temples suggested some unspeakable, silent melancholy; below the eyes her cheeks were dead white, faintly veined with blue to the bridge of the nose. The nose, aquiline and thin, had a touch of royal dignity, a reminder of her noble birth. Her lips, pure and delicately cut, were graced by a smile, the natural outcome of inexhaustible good humor. Her teeth were small and white. She had grown a little stout, but her shapely hips and slender waist were not disfigured by it; the autumn of her beauty displayed still some bright flowers forgotten by spring and the warmer glories of summer. Her finely molded arms, her smooth lustrous skin had gained a finer texture; the forms had filled out. And her open, serene countenance, with its faint color, the purity of her blue eyes, to which too rude a gaze would have been an offence, expressed unchanging gentleness, the infinite tenderness of the angels.

At the other side of the fireplace, in another armchair, sat the old sister of eighty, in every particular but dress the exact image of her brother; she listened to the paper while knitting stockings, for which sight is not needed. Her eyes were darkened by cataract, and she obstinately refused to be operated on, in spite of her sister-in-law's entreaties. She alone knew the secret motive of her de-

termination; she ascribed it to lack of courage, but in fact she did not choose that twenty-five louis should be spent on her; there would have been so much less in the house. Nevertheless, she would have liked to see her brother again. These two old people were an admirable foil to the Baroness's beauty. What woman would not have seemed young and handsome between Monsieur du Guénic and his sister?

Mademoiselle Zéphirine, deprived of sight, knew nothing of the changes that her eighty years had wrought in her looks. Her pallid, hollow face, to which the fixity of her white and sightless eyes gave a look of death, while three or four projecting teeth added an almost threatening expression; in which the deep eye-sockets were circled with red lines, and a few manly hairs, long since white, were visible on the chin and lips—this cold, calm face was framed in a little brown cotton hood quilted like a counterpane, edged with a cambric frill, and tied under her chin with ribbons that were never fresh. She wore a short upper skirt of stout cloth over a quilted petticoat, a perfect mattress, within which lurked double louis d'or; and she had pockets sewn to a waistband, which she took off at night and put on in the morning as a garment. Her figure was wrapped in the usual jacket bodice of Breton women, made of cloth like the skirt and finished with a close plaited frill, of which the washing formed the only subject of difference between her and the Baroness; she insisted on changing it but once a week. Out of the wadded sleeves of this jacket came a pair of withered but sinewy arms, and two ever-busy hands, somewhat red, which made her arms look as white as poplar wood. These fingers, clawlike from the contraction induced by the habit of knitting, were like a stocking-machine in constant motion; the wonder would have been to see them at rest. Now and then Mademoiselle du Guénic would take one of the long knitting needles darned into the bosom of her dress, and push it in under her hood among her white hairs. A stranger would have laughed to see how

calmly she stuck it in again, without any fear of pricking herself. She was as upright as a steeple; her columnar rigidity might be regarded as one of those old women's vanities which prove that pride is a passion indispensable to vitality. She had a bright smile; she too had done her duty.

As soon as Fanny saw that the Baron was asleep, she ceased reading. A sunbeam shot across from window to window, cutting the atmosphere of the old room in two by a band of gold, and casting a glory on the almost blackened furniture. The light caught the carvings of the cornice, fluttered over the cabinets, spread a shining face over the oak table, and gave cheerfulness to this softly sombre room, just as Fanny's voice brought to the old woman's spirit a harmony as luminous and gay as the sunbeam. Ere long the rays of the sun assumed a reddish glow, which by insensible degrees sank to the melancholy hues of dusk. The Baroness fell into serious thought, one of those spells of perfect silence which her old sister-in-law had noticed during a fortnight past, trying to account for them without questioning the Baroness in any way; but she was studying the causes of this absence of mind as only blind people can, who read as it were a black book with white letters, while every sound rings through their soul as though it were an oracular echo. The old blind woman, to whom the falling darkness now meant nothing, went on knitting, and the silence was so complete that the tick of her steel knitting needles could be heard.

"You have dropped the paper—but you are not asleep, sister," said the old woman sagaciously.

It was now dark; Mariotte came in to light the lamp, and placed it on a square table in front of the fire; then she fetched her distaff, her hank of flax, and a little stool, and sat down to spin in the window recess on the side toward the courtyard, as she did every evening. Gasselin was still busy in the outbuildings, attending to the Baron's horse and that of Calyste, seeing that all was right in the

stables, and giving the two fine hounds their evening meal. The glad barking of these two creatures was the last sound that roused the echoes lurking in the dark walls of the house.

These two horses and two dogs were the last remains of the splendor of chivalry. An imaginative man, sitting on the outer steps, and abandoning himself to the poetry of the images still living in this dwelling, might have been startled at hearing the dogs and the tramping hoofs of the neighing steeds.

Gasselin was one of the short, sturdy, square-built Breton race, with black hair and tanned faces, silent, slow, as stubborn as mules, but always going on the road marked out for them. He was now two-and-forty, and had lived in the house twenty-five years. Mademoiselle had engaged Gasselin as servant when he was fifteen, on hearing of the Baron's marriage and probable return. This henchman considered himself a member of the family. He had played with Calyste, he loved the horses and dogs, and talked to them and petted them as though they were his own. He wore a short jacket of blue linen with little pockets that flapped over his hips, and a waistcoat and trousers of the same material, in all seasons alike, blue stockings and hobnailed shoes. When the weather was very cold or wet he added the goatskin with the hair on worn in his province.

Mariotte, who was also past forty, was as a woman exactly what Gasselin was as a man. Never did a better pair run in harness; the same color, the same figure, the same small sharp black eyes. It was hard to imagine why Mariotte and Gasselin had never married; but it might have been criminal; they almost seemed like brother and sister. Mariotte had thirty crowns a year in wages, and Gasselin a hundred livres; but not for a thousand francs a year would they have quitted the house of the Guénics. They were both under the jurisdiction of old Mademoiselle, who had been in the habit of managing the house from the time of the war in la Vendée till her brother's return. Hence she had been greatly upset on hearing that her brother was bringing

home a mistress of the house, supposing that she would have to lay down the domestic sceptre in favor of the Baronne du Guénic, whose first subject she would then be.

Mademoiselle Zéphirine had been very agreeably surprised on finding that Miss Fanny O'Brien was born to a lofty position, a girl who detested the minute cares of housekeeping, and who, like all noble souls, would have preferred dry bread from the bakers to any food she had to prepare herself; capable of fulfilling all the duties of motherhood, strong to endure every necessary privation, but without energy for commonplace industry. When the Baron, in the name of his shrinking wife, begged his sister to rule the house, the old maid embraced the Baroness as her sister; she made a daughter of her, she adored her, happy in being allowed to continue her care of governing the house, and keeping it with incredible rigor and most economical habits, which she relaxed only on great occasions, such as her sister-in-law's confinement and feeding, and everything that could affect Calyste, the worshipped son of the house.

Though the two servants were accustomed to this strict rule, and needed no telling; though they took more care of their master's interests than of their own, still Mademoiselle Zéphirine had an eye on everything. Her attention having nothing to divert it, she was the woman to know without going to look how large the pile of walnuts should be in the loft, and how much corn was left in the stable-bin without plunging her sinewy arm into its depths. She wore a boatswain's whistle attached by a string to her waistband, and called Mariotte by whistling once, and Gasselin by whistling twice. Gasselin's chief happiness consisted in cultivating the garden and raising fine fruit and good vegetables. He had so little to do that but for his gardening he would have been bored to death. When he had groomed the horses in the morning he polished the floors, and cleaned the two ground-floor rooms; he had little to do for his masters. So in the garden you could not have

found a weed or a noxious insect. Sometimes Gasselin might be seen standing motionless and bareheaded in the sunshine, watching for a field-rat or the dreadful larvæ of the cock-chafer; then he would rush in with a child's glee to show the master the creature he had spent a week in catching. On fast days it was his delight to go to le Croisic to buy fish, cheaper there than at Guérande.

Never was there a family more united, on better terms, or more inseparable, than this pious and noble household. Masters and servants seemed to have been made for each other. In five-and-twenty years there had never been a trouble or a discord. The only sorrows they had known were the child's little ailments, and the only anxieties had come of the events of 1814, and again of 1830. If the same things were invariably done at the same hours, if the food varied only with the changes of the seasons, this monotony, like that of nature, with its alternation of cloud, rain, and sunshine, was made endurable by the affection that filled every heart, and was all the more helpful and beneficent because it was the outcome of natural laws.

When twilight was ended, Gasselin came into the room and respectfully inquired whether he were wanted.

"After prayers you can go out, or go to bed," said the Baron, rousing himself, "unless Madame or my sister—"

The two ladies nodded agreement. Gasselin, seeing them all rise to kneel on their chairs, fell on his knees. Mariotte knelt on her stool. Old Mademoiselle du Guénic said prayers aloud.

As she finished, a knock was heard at the outer gate. Gasselin went to open it.

"It is Monsieur le Curé, no doubt; he is almost always the first," remarked Mariotte.

And, in fact, they all recognized the footstep of the parish priest on the resonant steps to the balcony entrance. The Curé bowed respectfully to the three, addressing the Baron and the two ladies with the unctuous civility that a priest has at his command. In reply to an absent-minded

"Good-evening" from the mistress of the house, he gave her a look of priestly scrutiny.

"Are you uneasy, Madame, or unwell?" he asked.

"Thank you, no!" said she.

Monsieur Grimont, a man of about fifty, of middle height, wrapped in his gown, beneath which a pair of thick shoes with silver buckles were visible, showed above his bands a fat face, on the whole fair, but sallow. His hands were plump. His abbot-like countenance had something of the Dutch Burgomaster in its calm complexion and the tones of the flesh, and something, too, of the Breton peasant in its straight black hair and sparkling black eyes, which nevertheless were under the control of priestly decorum. His cheerfulness, like that of all people whose conscience is calm and pure, consented to jest. There was nothing anxious or forbidding in his look, as in that of those unhappy priests whose maintenance or power is disputed by their parishioners, and who, instead of being, as Napoleon so grandly said, the moral leaders of the people and natural justices of the peace, are regarded as enemies. The most unbelieving of strangers who should see Monsieur Grimont walking through Guérande would have recognized him as the sovereign of the Catholic town; but this sovereign abdicated his spiritual rule before the feudal supremacy of the du Guénic family. In this drawing-room he was as a chaplain in the hall of his liege. In church, as he gave the blessing, his hand always turned first toward the chapel of the House, where their hand and sword and their motto were carved on the keystone of the vaulting.

"I thought that Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël was here," said the Curé, seating himself, as he kissed the Baroness's hand. "She is losing her good habits. Is the fashion for dissipation spreading? For I observe that Monsieur le Chevalier is at les Touches again this evening."

"Say nothing of his visits there before Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël," exclaimed the old lady in an undertone.

"Ah! Mademoiselle," Mariotte put in, "how can you keep the whole town from talking?"

"And what do they say?" asked the Baroness.

"All the girls and the old gossips—everybody, in short—is saying that he is in love with Mademoiselle des Touches."

"A young fellow so handsome as Calyste is only following his calling by making himself loved," said the Baron.

"Here is Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël," said Mariotte.

The gravel in the courtyard was, in fact, heard to crunch under this lady's deliberate steps, heralded by a lad bearing a lantern. On seeing this retainer, Mariotte transferred her stool and distaff to the large hall, where she could chat with him by the light of the rosin candle that burned at the cost of the rich and stingy old maid, thus saving her master's.

Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël was a slight, thin woman, as yellow as the parchment of an archive, and wrinkled like a lake swept by the wind, with gray eyes, large prominent teeth, and hands like a man's; she was short, certainly crooked, and perhaps even humpbacked; but no one had ever been curious to study her perfections or imperfections. Dressed in the same style as Mademoiselle du Guénic, she made quite a commotion in a huge mass of petticoats and frills when she tried to find one of the two openings in her gown by which she got at her pockets; the strangest clinking of keys and money was then heard from beneath these skirts. All the iron paraphernalia of a good housewife was to be found on one side, and on the other her silver snuff-box, her thimble, her knitting, and other jangling objects.

Instead of the quilted hood worn by Mademoiselle du Guénic, she had a green bonnet, which she no doubt wore when she went to look at her melons; like them, it had faded from green to yellow, and as for its shape, fashion has lately revived it in Paris under the name of "Bibi." This bonnet was made under her own eye by her nieces, of green sarsnet purchased at Guérande, on a shape she bought new every five years at Nantes—for she allowed

it the life of an administration. Her nieces also made her gowns, cut by an immemorial pattern. The old maid still used the crutch-handled cane which ladies carried at the beginning of the reign of Marie-Antoinette. She was of the first nobility of Brittany. On her shield figured the ermines of the ancient duchy; the illustrious Breton house of Pen-Hoël ended in her and her sister.

This younger sister had married a Kergarouët, who, in spite of the disapprobation of the neighbors, had added the name of Pen-Hoël to his own, and called himself the Vicomte de Kergarouët-Pen-Hoël.

"Heaven has punished him," the old maid would say. "He has only daughters, and the name of Kergarouët-Pen-Hoël will become extinct."

Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël enjoyed an income of about seven thousand francs from land. For thirty-six years, since she had come of age, she herself had managed her estates; she rode out to inspect them, and on every point displayed the firmness of will characteristic of deformed persons. Her avarice was the amazement of all for ten leagues round, but viewed with no disapprobation. She kept one woman servant and this lad; all her expenditure, not inclusive of taxes, did not come to more than a thousand francs a year. Hence she was the object of the most flattering attentions from the Kergarouët-Pen-Hoëls, who spent the winter at Nantes, and the summer at their country-house on the banks of the Loire just below Indret. It was known that she intended to leave her fortune and her savings to that one of her nieces whom she might prefer. Every three months one of the four Demoiselles de Kergarouët came to spend a few days with her.

Jacqueline de Pen-Hoël, a great friend of Zéphirine du Guénic's, and brought up in the faith and fear of the Breton dignity of the Guénics, had conceived a plan, since Calyste's birth, of securing her wealth to this youth by getting him to marry one of these nieces, to be bestowed on him by the Vicomtesse de Kergarouët-Pen-Hoël. She proposed to repur-

chase some of the best land for the Guénics by paying off the farmers' loans. When avarice has an end in view, it ceases to be a vice; it is the instrument of virtue; its stern privations become a constant sacrifice; in short, it has greatness of purpose concealed beneath its meanness. Zéphirine was perhaps in Jacqueline's secret. Perhaps, too, the Baroness, whose whole intelligence was absorbed in love for her son and tender care for his father, may have guessed something when she saw with what pertinacious perseverance Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël would bring with her, day after day, Charlotte de Kergarouet, her favorite niece, now fifteen. The priest, Monsieur Grimont, was undoubtedly in her confidence; he helped the old lady to invest her money well. But if Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel had had three hundred thousand francs in gold—the sum at which her savings were commonly estimated; if she had had ten times more land than she owned, the du Guénics would never have allowed themselves to pay her such attention as might lead the old maid to fancy that they were thinking of her fortune. With an admirable instinct of truly Breton pride, Jacqueline de Pen-Hoel, gladly accepting the supremacy assumed by her old friends Zéphirine and the du Guénics, always expressed herself honored by a visit when the descendant of Irish kings and Zéphirine condescended to call on her. She went so far as to conceal with care the little extravagance which she winked at every evening by permitting her boy to burn an *oribus* at the du Guénics'—the ginger-bread colored candle which is commonly used in various districts in the West. This rich old maid was indeed aristocracy, pride, and dignity personified.

At the moment when the reader is studying her portrait, an indiscretion on the part of the Curé had betrayed the fact that, on the evening when the old Baron, the young Chevalier, and Gasselin stole away armed with swords and fowling-pieces to join MADAME in la Vendée—to Fanny's extreme terror, and to the great joy of the Bretons—Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel had placed in the Baron's hands a

sum of ten thousand francs in gold, an immense sacrifice, supplemented by ten thousand francs more, the fruits of a tithe collected by the Curé, which the old partisan was requested to lay at the feet of Henri V.'s mother, in the name of the Pen-Hoels and of the parish of Guérande.

Meanwhile she treated Calyste with the airs of a woman who believes she is in her rights; her schemes justified her in keeping an eye on him; not that she was strait-laced in her ideas as to questions of gallantry—she had all the indulgence of a woman of the old régime; but she had a horror of Revolutionary manners. Calyste, who might have risen in her esteem by intrigues with Breton women, would have fallen immensely if he had taken up what she called the new-fangled ways. Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel, who would have unearthed a sum of money to pay off a girl he had seduced, would have regarded Calyste as a reckless spendthrift if she had seen him driving a tilbury, or heard him talk of setting out for Paris. And if she had found him reading some impious review or newspaper, it is impossible to imagine what she might have done. To her, new notions meant the rotation of crops, sheer ruin under the guise of improvements and method, lands ultimately mortgaged as a result of experiments. To her, thrift was the real way to make a fortune; good management consisted in filling her outhouses with buckwheat, rye, and hemp, in waiting for prices to rise, at the risk of being known to force the market, and in resolutely hoarding her corn-sacks. As it happened, strangely enough, she had often met with good bargains that confirmed her in her principles. She was thought cunning, but she was not really clever; she had only the methodical habits of a Dutch woman, the caution of a cat, the pertinacity of a priest; and this, in a land of routine, was as good as the deepest perspicacity.

"Shall we see Monsieur du Halga this evening?" asked Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel, taking off her knitted worsted mittens after exchanging the usual civilities.

"Yes, Mademoiselle, I saw him airing his dog in the Mall," replied the Curé.

"Then our *mouche* will be lively this evening," said she. "We were but four last night."

On hearing the word *mouche*, the priest rose, and brought out of a drawer of one of the cabinets a small round basket of fine willow, some ivory counters as yellow as Turkish tobacco, from twenty years' service, and a pack of cards as greasy as those of the custom-house officers of Saint-Nazaire, who only have a new pack once a fortnight. The Abbé himself sorted out the proper number of counters for each player, and put the basket by the lamp in the middle of the table, with childish eagerness and the manner of a man accustomed to fulfil this little task. A loud rap in military style presently echoed through the silent depths of the old house. Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel's little servant went solemnly to open the gate. Before long the tall, lean figure of the Chevalier du Halga, formerly flag-captain under Admiral de Kergarouet, was seen, carefully dressed to suit the season, a black object in the dusk that still prevailed outside.

"Come in, Chevalier," cried Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel.

"The altar is prepared!" said the priest.

Du Halga, whose health was poor, wore flannel for the rheumatism, a black silk cap to protect his head against the fog, and a spencer to guard his precious chest from the sudden blasts of wind that refresh the atmosphere of Guérande. He always went about armed with a rattan to drive off dogs when they tried to make inopportune love to his own, which was a lady. This man, as minutely particular as any fine lady, put out by the smallest obstacles, speaking low to spare the voice remaining to him, had been in his day one of the bravest and most capable officers of the King's navy. He had been honored with the confidence of the Bailli de Suffren, and the Comte de Portenduère's friendship. His valor, as captain of Admiral de Kergarouet's flagship, was scored in legible characters on his face, seamed with

scars. No one, on looking at him, could have recognized the voice that had roared down the storm, the eye that had swept the horizon, the indomitable courage of a Breton seaman. He did not smoke, he never swore; he was as gentle and quiet as a girl, and devoted himself to his dog Thisbe and her various little whims with the absorption of an old woman. He gave every one a high idea of his departed gallantry. He never spoke of the startling acts which had amazed the Comte d'Estaing.

Though he stooped like a pensioner, and walked as though he feared to tread on eggs at every step, though he complained of a cool breeze, of a scorching sun, of a damp fog, he displayed fine white teeth set in red gums, which were reassuring as to his health; and, indeed, his complaint must have been an expensive one, for it consisted in eating four meals a day of monastic abundance. His frame, like the Baron's, was large-boned and indestructibly strong, covered with parchment stretched tightly over the bones, like the coat of an Arab horse that shines in the sun over its sinews. His complexion had preserved the tanned hue it had acquired in his voyages to India, but he had brought back no ideas and no reminiscences. He had emigrated; he had lost all his fortune; then he had recovered the Cross of Saint-Louis and a pension of two thousand francs, legitimately earned by his services, and paid out of the fund for naval pensions. The harmless hypochondria that led him to invent a thousand imaginary ailments was easily accounted for by his sufferings during the emigration. He had served in the Russian navy till the day when the Emperor Alexander wanted him to serve against France; he then retired and went to live at Odessa, near the Duc de Richelieu, with whom he came home, and who procured the payment of the pension due to this noble wreck of the old Breton navy.

At the death of Louis XVIII. he came home to Guérande, and was chosen mayor of the town. The Curé, the Chevalier, and Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël had been for fif-

teen years in the habit of spending their evenings at the Hotel du Guénic, whither also came a few persons of good family from the town and immediate neighborhood. It is easy to see that the Guénic family were the leaders of this little Faubourg Saint-Germain of the district, into which no official was admitted who had been appointed to his post by the new Government. For six years past the Curé invariably coughed at the critical words of *Domine, salvum fac regem*. Politics always stuck at that point in Guérande.

*Mouche* (a sort of loo) is a game played with five cards in each hand and a turn-up. The turned-up card decides the trumps. At every fresh deal each player is at liberty to play or to retire. If he throws away his hand, he loses only his deposit; for as long as no fines have been paid into the pool, each player must contribute to it. Those who play must make a trick, paid for in proportion to the contents of the pool; if there are five sous in the trick, he pays one sou. The player who fails to pay is *looed;* he then owes as much as the pool contains, which increases it for the following deal. The fines due are written down; they are added to the pools one after another in diminishing order, the heaviest before the lesser sums. Those who decline to play show their cards during the play, but they count for nothing. The players may discard and draw from the pack, as at *écarté*, in order of seniority. Each player may change as many cards as he likes, so the eldest and the second hands may use up the pack between them. The turned-up card belongs to the dealer, who is the youngest hand; he has a right to exchange it for any card in his own hand. One terrible card takes all others, and is known as *mistigris;* mistigris is the knave of clubs. This game, though so excessively simple, is not devoid of interest. The covetousness natural to man finds scope in it, as well as some diplomatic finessing and play of expression.

At the Hotel du Guénic each player purchased twenty counters for five sous, by which the stake amounted to five

liards each deal, an important sum in the eyes of these gamblers. With very great luck a player might win fifty sous, more than any one in Guérande spent in a day. And Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël came to this game—of which the simplicity is unsurpassed in the nomenclature of the Academy, unless by that of Beggar my Neighbor—with an eagerness as great as that of a sportsman at a great hunting party. Mademoiselle Zéphirine, who was the Baroness's partner, attached no less importance to the game of *mouche*. To risk a liard for the chance of winning five, deal after deal, constituted a serious financial speculation to the thrifty old woman, and she threw herself into it with as much moral energy as the greediest speculator puts into gambling on the Bourse for the rise and fall of shares.

By a diplomatic convention, dating from September, 1825, after a certain evening when Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël had lost thirty-seven sous, the game was ended as soon as any one expressed a wish to that effect after losing ten sous. Politeness would not allow of a player being put to the little discomfort of looking on at the game without taking part in it. But every passion has its jesuitical side. The Chevalier du Halga and the Baron, two old politicians, had found a way of evading the act. When all the players were equally eager to prolong an exciting game, the brave Chevalier, one of those bachelors who are prodigal and rich by the expenses they save, always offered to loan Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel or Mademoiselle Zéphirine ten counters when either of them had lost her five sous, on the understanding that she should repay them if she should win. An old bachelor might allow himself such an act of gallantry to the unmarried ladies. The Baron also would offer the old maids ten counters, under pretence of not stopping the game. The avaricious old women always accepted, not without some pressing, after the usage and custom of old maids. But to allow themselves such a piece of extravagance the Baron and the Chevalier must first have won, otherwise the offer bore the character of an affront.

This game was in its glory when a young Mademoiselle de Kergarouet was on a visit to her aunt—Kergarouet only, for the family had never succeeded in getting itself called Kergarouet-Pen-Hoel by anybody here, not even by the servants, who had indeed peremptory orders on this point. The aunt spoke of the *mouche* parties at the du Guénics' as a great treat. The girl was enjoined to make herself agreeable—an easy matter enough when she saw the handsome Calyste, on whom the four young ladies all doted. These damsels, brought up in the midst of modern civilization, thought little of five sous, and paid fine after fine. Then fines would be scored up to a total sometimes of five francs, on a scale ranging from two sous and a half up to ten sous. These were evenings of intense excitement to the old blind woman. The tricks were called *mains* (or hands) at Guérande. The Baroness would press her foot on her sister-in-law's as many times as she had, as she believed, tricks in her hand. The question of play or no play on occasions when the pool was full led to secret struggles in which covetousness contended with alarms. The players would ask each other, "Are you coming in?" with feelings of envy of those who had good enough cards to tempt fate, and spasms of despair when they were forced to retire.

If Charlotte de Kergarouet, who was commonly thought foolhardy, was lucky in her daring when her aunt had won nothing, she was treated with coldness when they got home, and had a little lecture: "She was too decided and forward; a young girl ought not to challenge persons older than herself; she had an over-bold manner of seizing the pool, or declaring to play; a young person should show more reserve and modesty in her manners; it was not seemly to laugh at the misfortunes of others," and so forth.

Then perennial jests, repeated a thousand times a year, but always fresh, turned on the carriage of the basket when the pool overfilled it. They must get oxen to draw it, elephants, horses, asses, dogs. And at the end of twenty years no one noticed the staleness of the joke; it always provoked

the same smile. It was the same thing with the remarks caused by the annoyance of seeing a pool taken from those who had helped to fill it and got nothing out. The cards were dealt with automatic slowness. They talked in chest tones. And these respectable and highborn personages were so delightfully mean as to suspect each other's play. Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel almost always accused the Curé of cheating when he won a pool.

"But what is so odd," the Curé would say, "is that I never cheat when I am fined."

No one laid down a card without profound meditation, without keen scrutiny, and more or less astute hints, ingenious and searching remarks. The deals were interrupted, you may be sure, by gossip as to what was going on in the town, or discussions on politics. Frequently the players would pause for a quarter of an hour, their cards held in a fan against their chest, absorbed in talk. Then, if after such an interruption a counter was short in the pool, everybody was certain that his or her counter was not missing; and generally it was the Chevalier who made up the loss, under general accusations of thinking of nothing but the singing in his ears, his headache, or his fads, and of forgetting to put in. As soon as he had paid up a counter, old Zéphirine or the cunning hunchback was seized with remorse; they then fancied that perhaps the fault was theirs; they thought, they doubted; but, after all, the Chevalier could afford the little loss! The Baron often quite forgot what he was about when the misfortunes of the Royal family came under discussion.

Sometimes the game resulted in a way that was invariably a surprise to the players, who each counted on being the winner. After a certain number of rounds each had won back his counters, and went away, the hour being late, without loss or profit, but not without excitement. On these depressing evenings the *mouche* was abused; it had not been interesting; the players accused the game, as negroes beat the reflection of the moon in water when the weather is bad.

The evening had been dull; they had toiled so hard for so little.

When, on their first visit, the Vicomte de Kergarouet and his wife spoke of whist and boston as games more interesting than *mouche*, and were encouraged to teach them by the Baroness, who was bored to death by *mouche*, the company lent themselves to the innovation, not without strong protest; but it was impossible to make these games understood; and as soon as the Kergarouets had left, they were spoken of as overwhelmingly abstruse, as algebraical puzzles, and incredibly difficult. They all preferred their beloved *mouche*, their unpretentious little *mouche*. And *mouche* triumphed over the modern games, as old things constantly triumph over new in Brittany.

While the Curé dealt the cards, the Baroness was asking the Chevalier du Halga the same questions as she had asked the day before as to his health. The Chevalier made it a point of honor to have some new complaint. Though the questions were always the same, the Captain had a great advantage in his replies. To-day his false ribs had been troubling him. The remarkable thing was that the worthy man never complained of his wounds. Everything serious he was prepared for, he understood it; but fantastic ailments —pains in his head, dogs devouring his inside, bells ringing in his ears, and a thousand other crotchets worried him greatly; he set up as an incurable, with all the more reason that physicians know no remedy for maladies that are non-existent.

"Yesterday, I fancy you had pains in your legs?" said the Curé very seriously.

"They move about," replied du Halga.

"Legs in your false ribs?" asked Mademoiselle Zéphirine.

"And made no halt on the way?" said Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel with a smile.

The Chevalier bowed gravely, with a negative shake of the head, not without fun in it, which would have proved

to an observer that in his youth the seaman must have been witty, loved, and loving. His fossilized life at Guérande covered perhaps many memories. As he stood planted on his heron's legs in the sun, stupidly watching the sea, or his dog sporting on the Mall, perhaps he was alive again in the Earthly Paradise of a past rich in remembrance.

"So the old Duc de Lenoncourt is dead!" said the Baron, recalling the passage in the "Quotidienne" at which his wife had stopped. "Well, well, the first gentleman-in-waiting had not long to wait before following his master. I shall soon go too."

"My dear! my dear!" said his wife, gently patting his lean and bony hand.

"Let him talk, sister," said Zéphirine. "So long as I am above ground, he will not go under ground. He is younger than I am."

A cheerful smile brightened the old woman's face when the Baron dropped a reflection of this kind, the players and callers would look at each other anxiously, grieved to find the King of Guérande out of spirits. Those who had come to see him would say as they went away, "Monsieur du Guénic is much depressed; have you noticed how much he sleeps?" And next day all Guérande would be talking of it: "The Baron du Guénic is failing."—The words began the conversation in every house in the place.

"And is Thisbe well?" asked Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel as soon as the deal was over.

"The poor little beast is like me," said the Chevalier. "Her nerves are out of order; she is always holding up one of her legs as she runs.—Like this."

And in showing how Thisbe ran, by bending his arm as he raised it, the Chevalier allowed his neighbor, Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël, to see his cards; she wanted to know whether he had trumps or *mistigris*. This was a first finesse to which he fell a prey.

"Oh!" exclaimed the Baroness, "the tip of Monsieur le Curé's nose has turned pale, he must have mistigris!"

The joy of having mistigris was so great to the Curé, as to all the players, that the poor priest could not disguise it. There is in each human face some spot where every secret emotion of the heart betrays itself; and these good people, accustomed to watch each other, had, after the lapse of years, discovered the weak place in the Curé—when he had mistigris the tip of his nose turned white. Then they all took care not to play.

"You have had visitors to-day?" said the Chevalier to Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël.

"Yes; one of my brother-in-law's cousins. He surprised me by telling me of the intended marriage of Madame la Comtesse de Kergarouët, a demoiselle de Fontaine—"

"A daughter of Grand-Jacques!" exclaimed du Halga, who during his stay in Paris had never left his Admiral's side.

"The Countess inherits everything; she has married a man who was ambassador.—He told me the most extraordinary things about our neighbor, Mademoiselle des Touches; so extraordinary that I will not believe them. Calyste could never be so attentive to her; he has surely enough good sense to perceive such monstrosities."

"Monstrosities!" said the Baron, roused by the word.

The Baroness and the priest looked meaningly at each other. The cards were dealt. Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël had mistigris; she did not want to continue the conversation, but was glad to cover her delight under the general amazement caused by this word.

"It is your turn to lead, Monsieur le Baron," said she, bridling.

"My nephew is not one of those young men who like monstrosities," said Zéphirine, poking her knitting-pin through her hair.

"Mistigris!" cried Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel, without answering her friend.

The Curé, who appeared fully informed as to all that concerned Calyste and Mademoiselle des Touches, did not enter the lists.

"What does she do that is so extraordinary, this Mademoiselle des Touches?" asked the Baron.

"She smokes," said Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel.

"It is very wholesome," said the Chevalier.

"Her bacon?" asked the Baron.

"Her bacon! She does not save it," retorted the old maid.

"Every one played, and every one is looed; I have the king, queen, and knave of trumps, mistigris, and a king," said the Baroness. "The pool is ours, sister."

This stroke, won without play, overwhelmed Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel, who thought no more of Calyste and Mademoiselle des Touches. At nine o'clock no one remained in the room but the Baroness and the Curé. The four old people had gone away and to bed.

The Chevalier, as usual, escorted Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel to her own house in the Market Place, making remarks on the skill of the last player, on their good or ill luck, or on the ever-new glee with which Mademoiselle Zéphirine's pocket engulfed her winnings, for the old blind woman made no attempt now to disguise the expression of her sentiments in her face. Madame du Guénic's absence of mind was their subject to-night. The Chevalier had observed the charming Irishwoman's inattention to the game. On the doorstep, when her boy had gone upstairs, the old lady replied in confidence to the Chevalier's guesses as to the Baroness's strange manner by these words, big with importance:

"I know the reason; Calyste is done for if he is not soon married. He is in love with Mademoiselle des Touches—an actress!"

"In that case, send for Charlotte."

"My sister shall hear from me to-morrow," said Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel, bidding him good-night.

From this study of a normal evening, the commotion may be imagined that was produced in the home circles of Guérande by the arrival, the stay the departure, or even the passing through of a stranger.

When not a sound was audible in the Baron's room or in his sister's, Madame du Guénic turned to the priest, who was pensively playing with the counters.

"I see that you at last share my uneasiness about Calyste," she said.

"Did you notice Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel's prim air this evening?" asked he.

"Yes," replied the Baroness.

"She has, I know, the very best intentions toward our dear Calyste; she loves him as if he were her son; and his conduct in la Vendée at his father's side, with MADAME'S praise of his devoted behavior, has added to the affection Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel feels for him. She will endow either of her nieces whom Calyste may marry with all her fortune by deed of gift.

"You have, I know, in Ireland, a far richer match for your beloved boy; but it is well to have two strings to one's bow. In the event of your family not choosing to undertake to settle anything on Calyste, Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel's fortune is not to be despised. You could, no doubt, find your son a wife with seven thousand francs a year, but not the savings of forty years, nor lands managed, tilled, and kept up as Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel's are. That wicked woman, Mademoiselle des Touches, has come to spoil everything. We have at last found out something about her."

"Well?" asked the mother.

"Oh, she is a slut, a baggage," exclaimed the Curé. "A woman of doubtful habits, always hanging about the theatres in the company of actors and actresses, squandering her fortune with journalists, painters, musicians—the devil's own, in short! When she writes, she uses a different name in her books, and is better known by that, it is said, than by that of des Touches. A perfect imp, who has never been inside a church since her first communion, excepting to stare at statues or pictures. She has spent her fortune in decorating les Touches in the most improper manner to make it a sort of Mahomet's Paradise, where the houris are not women. There

is more good wine drunk there while she is in the place than in all Guérande besides in a year. Last year the Demoiselles Bougniol had for lodgers some men with goats' beards, suspected of being "blues," who used to go to her house, and who sang songs that made those virtuous girls blush and weep. That is the woman your son at present adores.

"If that creature were to ask this evening for one of the atrocious books in which atheists nowadays laugh everything to scorn, the young Chevalier would come and saddle his horse with his own hands, to ride off at a gallop to fetch it for her from Nantes. I do not know that Calyste would do so much for the Church. And then, Bretonne as she is, she is not a Royalist. If it were necessary to march out, gun in hand, for the good cause, should Mademoiselle des Touches—or Camille Maupin, for that, I remember, is her name—want to keep Calyste with her, your son would let his old father set out alone."

"No," said the Baroness.

"I should not like to put him to the test, you might feel it too painfully," replied the Curé. "All Guérande is in a commotion over the Chevalier's passion for this amphibious creature that is neither man nor woman, who smokes like a trooper, writes like a journalist, and, at this moment, has under her roof the most malignant writer of them all, according to the postmaster—a trimmer who reads all the papers. It is talked of at Nantes. This morning the Kergarouet cousin, who wants to see Charlotte married to a man who has sixty thousand francs a year, came to call on Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel, and turned her head with roundabout tales about Mademoiselle des Touches which lasted seven hours. —There is a quarter to ten striking by the church clock, and Calyste is not come in; he is at les Touches—perhaps he will not come back till morning."

The Baroness listened to the Curé, who had unconsciously substituted monologue for dialogue; he was looking at this lamb of his flock, reading her uneasy thoughts in her face. The Baroness was blushing and trembling. When the Abbé

Grimont saw tears in the distressed mother's beautiful eyes, he was deeply touched.

"I will see Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel to-morrow, be comforted," said he, in an encouraging tone. "The mischief is, perhaps, not so great as rumor says; I will find out the truth. Besides, Mademoiselle Jacqueline has confidence in me. Again, we have brought up Calyste, and he will not allow himself to be bewitched by the demon; he will do nothing to disturb the peace of his family, or the plans we are making for his future life. Do not weep; all is not lost, Madame; one fault is not vice."

"You only tell me the details," said the Baroness. "Was not I the first to perceive the change in Calyste? A mother feels keenly the pain of being second in her son's affections, the grief of not being alone in his heart. That phase of a man's life is one of the woes of motherhood; but though I knew it must come, I did not expect it so soon. And, then, I could have wished that he should have taken into his heart some beautiful and noble creature, not a mere actress, a posture maker, a woman who frequents theatres, an authoress accustomed to feign feeling, a bad woman who will deceive him and make him wretched. She has had 'affairs' ?"

"With many men," said the Abbé Grimont. "And yet this miscreant was born in Brittany. She is a disgrace to her native soil. On Sunday I will preach a sermon about her."

"By no means!" exclaimed the Baroness. "The marshmen and peasants are capable of attacking les Touches. Calyste is worthy of his name; he is a true Breton; and some evil might come of it if he were there, for he would fight for her as if she were the Blessed Virgin."

"It is striking ten; I will bid you good-night," said the Abbé, lighting the *oribus* of his lantern, of which the clear glass panes and glittering metal-work showed his housekeeper's minute care for all the concerns of the house. "Who could have told me, Madame," he went on, "that a young man nursed at your breast, brought up by me in

Christian ideas, a fervent Catholic, a boy who lived like a lamb without spot, would plunge into such a foul bog?"

"But is that quite certain?" said the mother. "And, after all, how could any woman help loving Calyste?"

"No proof is needed beyond that witch's prolonged stay at les Touches. During twenty-four years, since she came of age, this is the longest visit she has paid here. Happily for us, her apparitions have hitherto been brief."

"A woman past forty!" said the Baroness. "I have heard it said in Ireland that such a woman is the most dangerous mistress a young man can have."

"On that point I am ignorant," replied the Curé. "Nay, and I shall die in my ignorance."

"Alas! and so shall I," said the Baroness. "I wish now that I had ever been in love, to be able to study, advise, and comfort Calyste."

The priest did not cross the clean little courtyard alone; Madame du Guénic went with him as far as the gate, in the hope of hearing Calyste's step in Guérande; but she heard only the heavy sound of the Abbé's deliberate tread, which grew fainter in the distance, and ceased when the shutting of the priest's door echoed through the silent town.

The poor mother went indoors in despair at learning that the whole town was informed of what she had believed herself alone in knowing. She sat down, revived the lamp by cutting the wick with a pair of old scissors, and took up the worsted work she was accustomed to do while waiting for Calyste. She flattered herself that she thus induced her son to come home earlier, to spend less time with Mademoiselle des Touches. But this stratagem of maternal jealousy was in vain. Calyste's visits to les Touches became more and more frequent, and every evening he came in a little later; at last, the previous night, he had not returned till midnight.

The Baroness, sunk in meditation, set her stitches with the energy of women who can think while following some manual occupation. Any one who should have seen her bent to catch the light of the lamp, in the midst of the pan-

elling of this room, four centuries old, must have admired the noble picture. Fanny's flesh had a transparence that seemed to show her thoughts legible on her brow. Stung, now, by the curiosity that comes to pure-minded women, she wondered by what diabolical secrets these daughters of Baal so bewitched a man as to make him forget his mother and family, his country, his self-interest. Then she went so far as to wish she could see the woman, so as to judge her sanely. She calculated the extent of the mischief that the innovating spirit of the age—which the Curé described as so dangerous to youthful souls—might do to her only child, till now as guileless and pure as an innocent girl, whose beauty could not be fresher than his.

Calyste, a noble offshoot of the oldest Breton and the noblest Irish blood, had been carefully brought up by his mother. Till the moment when the Baroness handed him over to the Curé of Guérande, she was sure that not an indecent word, nor an evil idea, had ever soiled her son's ear or his understanding. The mother, after rearing him on her own milk, and thus giving him a double infusion of her blood, could present him in virginal innocence to the priest who, out of reverence for the family, undertook to give him a complete and Christian education. Calyste was educated on the plan of the Seminary where the Abbé Grimont had been brought up. His mother taught him English: a mathematical master was discovered, not without difficulty, among the clerks at Saint-Nazaire. Calyste, of course, knew nothing of modern literature, or of the latest advance and progress of science. His education was limited to the geography and emasculated history taught in girls' schools, to the Latin and Greek of the Seminary, to the literature of dead languages, and a limited selection of French writers. When, at sixteen, he began what the Abbé called his course of philosophy, he was still as innocent as at the moment when Fanny had handed him over to the Curé. The Church was no less maternal than the mother; without being bigoted or ridiculous, this well-beloved youth was a fervent Catholic.

The Baroness longed to plan a happy and obscure life for her handsome and immaculate son. She expected some little fortune from an old aunt, about two or three thousand pounds sterling; this sum, added to the present fortune of the Guénics, might enable her to find a wife for Calyste who would bring him twelve or fifteen thousand francs a year. Charlotte de Kergarouet, with her aunt's money, some rich Irish girl, or any other heiress—it was a matter of indifference to the Baroness. She knew nothing of love; like all the people among whom she lived, she regarded marriage as a stepping-stone to fortune. Passion was a thing unknown to these Catholics, old people wholly occupied in saving their souls, in thinking of God, the King, and their own wealth.

No one, therefore, can be surprised at the gravity of the reflections that mingled with the wounded feelings in this mother's heart, living, as she did, as much for her boy's interests as by his affection. If the young couple would but listen to reason, by living parsimoniously and economizing, as country folk know how, by the second generation the du Guénics might repurchase their estates and reconquer the splendor of wealth. The Baroness hoped to live to be old that she might see the dawn of that life of ease. Mademoiselle du Guénic had understood and adopted this scheme, and now it was threatened by Mademoiselle des Touches.

Madame du Guénic heard midnight strike with horror, and she endured an hour more of fearful alarms, for the stroke of one rang out, and still Calyste had not come home.

"Will he stay there?" she wondered. "It would be the first time—poor child!"

At this moment Calyste's step was heard in the street. The poor mother, in whose heart joy took the place of anxiety, flew from the room to the gate and opened it for her son.

"My dearest mother," cried Calyste, with a look of vexation, "why sit up for me? I have the latch-key and a tinder-box."

"You know, my child, that I can never sleep while you are out," said she, kissing him.

When the Baroness had returned to the room, she looked into her son's face to read in its expression what had happened during the evening; but this look produced in her, as it always did, a certain emotion which custom does not weaken —which all loving mothers feel as they gaze at their human masterpiece, and which for a moment dims their sight.

Calyste had black eyes, full of vigor and sunshine, inherited from his father, with the fine fair hair, the aquiline nose and lovely mouth, the turned-up finger-tips, the soft complexion, finish, and fairness of his mother. Though he looked not unlike a girl dressed as a man, he was wonderfully strong. His sinews had the elasticity and tension of steel springs, and the singular effect of his black eyes had a charm of its own. As yet he had no hair on his face; this late development, it is said, is a promise of long life. The young Chevalier, who wore a short jacket of black velvet, like his mother's gown, with silver buttons, had a blue neckerchief, neat gaiters, and trousers of gray drill. His snowy-white forehead bore the traces as it seemed of great fatigue, but, in fact, they were those of a burden of sad thoughts. His mother, having no suspicion of the sorrows that were eating the lad's heart out, ascribed this transient change to happiness. Calyste was, nevertheless, as beautiful as a Greek god, handsome without conceit; for, in the first place, he was accustomed to see his mother, and he also cared but little for beauty, which he knew to be useless.

"And those lovely smooth cheeks," thought she, "where the rich young blood flows in a thousand tiny veins, belong to another woman, who is mistress, too, of that girllike brow? Passion will stamp them with its agitations, and dim those fine eyes, as liquid now as a child's!"

The bitter thought fell heavy on Madame du Guénic's heart, and spoiled her pleasure.

It must seem strange that, in a family where six persons were obliged to live on three thousand francs a year, the son should have a velvet coat, and the mother a velvet dress; but Fanny O'Brien had rich relations and aunts in London

who reminded the Breton Baroness of their existence by sending her presents. Some of her sisters, having married well, took an interest in Calyste so far as to think of finding him a rich wife, knowing that he was as handsome and as well born as their exiled favorite Fanny.

"You stayed later at les Touches than you did yesterday, my darling?" she said at last, in a broken voice.

"Yes, mother dear," replied he, without adding any explanation.

The brevity of the answer brought a cloud to his mother's brow; she postponed any explanation till the morrow. When mothers are disturbed by such alarms as the Baroness felt at this moment, they almost tremble before their sons; they instinctively feel the effects of the great emancipation of love; they understand all that this new feeling will rob them of; but, at the same time, they are, in a sense, glad of their son's happiness; there is a fierce struggle in their heart. Though the result is that the son is grown up, and on a higher level, true mothers do not like their tacit abdication; they would rather keep their child little and wanting care. That, perhaps, is the secret of mothers' favoritism for weakly, deformed, and helpless children.

"You are very tired, dear child," said she, swallowing down her tears. "Go to bed."

A mother who does not know everything her son is doing thinks of him as lost when she loves and is as well loved as Fanny. And perhaps any other mother would have quaked in her place as much as Madame du Guénic. The patience of twenty years might be made useless. Calyste—a human masterpiece of noble, prudent, and religious training—might be ruined; the happiness so carefully prepared for him might be destroyed forever by a woman.

Next day Calyste slept till noon, for his mother would not allow him to be roused; Mariotte gave the spoiled boy his breakfast in bed. The immutable and almost conventual rule that governed the hours of meals yielded to the young

gentleman's caprices. Indeed, when at any time it was necessary to obtain Mademoiselle du Guénic's bunch of keys to get out something between meals which would necessitate interminable explanations, the only way of doing it was to plead some whim of Calyste's.

At about one o'clock the Baron, his wife, and Mademoiselle were sitting in the dining-room; they dined at three. The Baroness had taken up the "Quotidienne," and was finishing it to her husband, who was always rather more wakeful before his meals. Just as she had done, Madame du Guénic heard her son's step on the floor above, and laid down the paper, saying: "Calyste, I suppose, is dining at les Touches again to-day; he has just finished dressing."

"He takes his pleasure—that boy!" said the old lady, pulling a silver whistle out of her pocket, and whistling once.

Mariotte came through the turret, making her appearance at the door which was hidden by a silk damask curtain, like those at the windows.

"Yes," said she, "did you please to want anything?"

"The Chevalier is dining at les Touches; we shall not want the fish."

"Well, we do not know yet," said the Baroness.

"You seem vexed about it, sister; I know by the tone of your voice," said the blind woman.

"Monsieur Grimont has learned some serious facts about Mademoiselle des Touches, who, during the last year, has done so much to change our dear Calyste."

"In what way?" asked the Baron.

"Well, he reads all sorts of books."

"Ah, ha!" said the Baron; "then that is why he neglects hunting and riding."

"She leads a very reprehensible life, and calls herself by a man's name," Madame du Guénic went on.

"A nickname among comrades," said the old man. "I used to be called *l'Intimé*, the Comte de Fontaine was *Grand-Jacques*, the Marquis de Montauran was *le Gars*. I was a

great friend of *Ferdinand's;* he did not submit, any more than I did. Those were good times! There was plenty of fighting, and we had some fun here and there, all the same."

These reminiscences of the war, thus taking the place of paternal anxiety, distressed Fanny for a moment. The Curé's revelations, and her son's want of confidence, had hindered her sleeping.

"And if Monsieur le Chevalier should be in love with Mademoiselle des Touches, where is the harm?" exclaimed Mariotte. "She is a fine woman, and has thirty thousand crowns a year."

"What are you talking about, Mariotte," cried the old man. "A du Guénic to marry a des Touches! The des Touches were not even our squires at a time when the du Guesclins regarded an alliance with us as a distinguished honor."

"A woman who calls herself by a man's name—Camille Maupin!" added the Baroness.

"The Maupins are an old family," said the old man. "They are Norman, and bear *gules, three*—" he stopped short. "But she cannot be a man and a woman at the same time."

"She calls herself Maupin at the theatre."

"A des Touches cannot be an actress," said the old man. "If I did not know you, Fanny, I should think you were mad."

"She writes pieces and books," the Baroness went on.

"Writes books!" said the Baron, looking at his wife with as much astonishment as if he had heard of a miracle. "I have heard that Mademoiselle de Scudéri and Madame de Sévigné wrote books, and that was not the best of what they did. But only Louis XIV. and his court could produce such prodigies."

"You will be dining at les Touches, won't you, Monsieur?" said Mariotte to Calyste, who came in.

"Probably," said the young man.

family; she left the room without waiting to hear the question Madame du Guénic was about to put to Calyste.

"You are going to les Touches again, my Calyste?" said she, with an emphasis on *my* Calyste. "And les Touches is not a decent and reputable house. The mistress of it leads a wild life; she will corrupt our boy. Camille Maupin makes him read a great many books—she has had a great many adventures! And you knew it, bad child, and never said anything about it to your old folk."

"The Chevalier is discreet," said his father, "an old world virtue!"

"Too discreet!" said the jealous mother, as she saw the color mount to her son's brow.

"My dear mother," said Calyste, kneeling down before her, "I did not think it necessary to proclaim my defeat. Mademoiselle des Touches, or, if you prefer it, Camille Maupin, rejected my love eighteen months since, when she was here last. She gently made fun of me; she might be my mother, she said; a woman of forty who loved a minor committed a sort of incest, and she was incapable of such depravity. In short, she laughed at me in a hundred ways, and quite overpowered me, for she has the wit of an angel. Then, when she saw me crying bitter tears, she comforted me by offering me her friendship in the noblest way. She has even more heart than brains; she is as generous as you are. I am like a child to her now.—Then, when she came here again, I heard that she loved another man, and I resigned myself.—Do not repeat all the calumnies you hear about her; Camille is an artist; she has genius, and leads one of those exceptional lives which cannot be judged by ordinary standards."

"My child!" said the pious Fanny, "nothing can excuse a woman for not living according to the ordinances of the Church. She fails in her duties toward God and toward society by failing in the gentle religion of her sex. A woman commits a sin even by going to a theatre; but

flies about the world, sometimes with an enemy of the Pope's, sometimes with a musician — Oh! Calyste! you will find it hard to convince me that such things are acts of faith, hope, or charity. Her fortune was given her by God to do good. What use does she make of it?"

Calyste suddenly stood up; he looked at his mother and said: "Mother, Camille is my friend. I cannot hear her spoken of in this way, for I would give my life for her."

"Your life?" said the Baroness, gazing at her son in terror. "Your life is our life—the life of us all!"

"My handsome nephew has made use of many words that I do not understand," said the old blind woman, turning to Calyste.

"Where has he learned them?" added his mother. "At les Touches."

"Why, my dear mother, she found me as ignorant as a carp."

"You knew all that was essential in knowing the duties enjoined on us by religion," replied the Baroness. "Ah! that woman will undermine your noble and holy beliefs." The old aunt rose and solemnly extended her hand toward her brother, who was sleeping.

"Calyste," said she, in a voice that came from her heart, "your father never opened a book, he speaks Breton, he fought in the midst of perils for the King and for God. Educated men had done the mischief, and gentlemen of learning had deserted their country.—Learn if you will."

She sat down again, and began knitting with the vehemence that came of her mental agitation. Calyste was struck by this Phocion-like utterance.

"In short, my dearest, I have a presentiment of some evil hanging over you in that house," said his mother, in a broken voice, as her tears fell.

"Who is making Fanny cry?" exclaimed the old man, suddenly wakened by the sound of his wife's voice. He looked round at her, his son, and his sister.

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing, my dear," replied the Baroness.

"Mamma," said Calyste, in his mother's ear, 'it is impossible that I should explain matters now; but we will talk it over this evening. When you know all, you will bless Mademoiselle des Touches."

"Mothers have no love of cursing," replied the Baroness, "and I should never curse any woman who truly loved my Calyste."

The young man said good-by to his father, and left the house. The Baron and his wife rose to watch him as he crossed the courtyard, opened the gate, and disappeared. The Baroness did not take up the paper again; she was agitated. In a life so peaceful, so monotonous, this little discussion was as serious as a quarrel in any other family; and the mother's anxiety, though soothed, was not dispelled. Whither would this friendship, which might demand and imperil her boy's life, ultimately lead him? How could she, the Baroness, have reason to bless Mademoiselle des Touches? These two questions were as all-important to her simple soul as the maddest revolution can be to a diplomatist. Camille Maupin was a revolution in the quiet and simple home.

"I am very much afraid that this woman will spoil him for us," said she, taking up the newspaper again.

"My dear Fanny," said the old Baron, with knowing sprightliness, "you are too completely an angel to understand such things. Mademoiselle des Touches is, they say, as black as a crow, as strong as a Turk, and she is forty—our dear boy was sure to be attracted by her. He will tell a few very honorable fibs to conceal his happiness. Let him enjoy the illusions of his first love."

"If it were any other woman—"

"But, dearest Fanny, if the woman were a saint, she would not make your son welcome."

The Baroness went back to the paper.

"I will go to see her," said the old man, "and tell you

The speech has no point but in retrospect. After hearing the history of Camille Maupin, you may imagine the Baron face to face with this famous woman.

The town of Guérande, which for two months past had seen Calyste—its flower and its pride—going every day, morning or evening—sometimes both morning and evening—to les Touches, supposed that Mademoiselle des Touches was passionately in love with the handsome lad, and did her utmost to bewitch him. More than one girl and one young woman wondered what was the witchcraft of an old woman that she had such absolute empire over the angelic youth. And so, as Calyste crossed the High Street to go out by the gate to le Croisic, more than one eye looked anxiously after him.

It now becomes necessary to account for the reports that were current concerning the personage whom Calyste was going to see. These rumors, swelled by Breton gossip, and envenomed by the ignorance of the public, had reached even the Curé. The Tax-Receiver, the Justice of the Peace, the head clerk of the customs at Saint-Nazaire, and other literate persons in the district, had not reassured the Abbé by telling him of the eccentric life led by the woman and artist hidden under the name of Camille Maupin.

She had not yet come to eating little children, to killing her slaves, like Cleopatra, to throwing men into the river, as the heroine of the "Tour de Nesle" is falsely accused of doing; still, to the Abbé Grimont, this monstrous creature, at once a siren and an atheist, was a most immoral combination of woman and philosopher, and fell short of every social law laid down to control or utilize the weaknesses of the fair sex. Just as Clara Gazul is the feminine pseudonym of a clever man, and George Sand that of a woman of genius, so Camille Maupin was the mask behind which a charming girl long hid herself—a Bretonne named Félicité des Touches, she who was now giving the Baronne

du Guénic and the worthy Curé of Guérande so much cause for anxiety. This family has no connection with that of the des Touches of Touraine, to which the Regent's ambassador belongs, a man more famous now for his literary talents than for his diplomacy.

Camille Maupin, one of the few famous women of the nineteenth century, was long supposed to be really a man, so manly was her first appearance as an author. Everybody is now familiar with the two volumes of dramas, impossible to put on the stage, written in the manner of Shakespeare or of Lopez de Vega, and brought out in 1822, which caused a sort of literary revolution when the great question of Romanticism *versus* Classicism was a burning one in the papers, at clubs, and at the Académie. Since then Camille Maupin has written several plays and a novel which have not belied the success of her first efforts, now rather too completely forgotten.

An explanation of the chain of circumstances by which a girl assumed a masculine incarnation—by which Félicité des Touches made herself a man and a writer—of how, more fortunate than Madame de Stael, she remained free, and so was more readily excused for her celebrity—will, no doubt, satisfy much curiosity, and justify the existence of one of those monstrosities which stand up among mankind like monuments, their fame being favored by their rarity — for in twenty centuries scarcely twenty great women are to be counted. Hence, though she here plays but a secondary part, as she had great influence over Calyste, and is a figure in the literary history of the time, no one will be sorry if we pause to study her for a rather longer time than modern fiction usually allows.

In 1793 Mademoiselle Félicité des Touches found herself an orphan. Thus her estates escaped the confiscation which no doubt would have fallen on her father or brother. Her father died on the 10th of August, killed on the palace steps among the defenders of the King, on whom he was

young member of the corps, was massacred at les Carmes. Mademoiselle des Touches was but two years old when her mother died of grief a few days after this second blow. On her deathbed Madame des Touches placed her little girl in the care of her sister, a nun at Chelles. This nun, Madame de Faucombe, very prudently took the child to Faucombe, an estate of some extent near Nantes, belonging to Madame des Touches, where she settled with three Sisters from the convent. During the last days of the Terror, the mob of Nantes demolished the chateau and seized the Sisters and Mademoiselle des Touches, who were thrown into prison under a false charge of having harbored emissaries from Pitt and from Coburg. The ninth Thermidor saved them. Félicité's aunt died of the fright; two of the Sisters fled from France; the third handed the little girl over to her nearest relation, Monsieur de Faucombe, her mother's uncle, who lived at Nantes, and then joined her companions in exile.

Monsieur de Faucombe, a man of sixty, had married a young wife, to whom he left the management of his affairs. He busied himself only with archæology, a passion, or, to be accurate, a mania, which helps old men to think themselves alive. His ward's education was left entirely to chance. Félicité, little cared for by a young woman who threw herself into all the pleasures of the Emperor's reign, brought herself up like a boy. She sat with Monsieur de Faucombe in his library, and read whatever he might happen to be reading. Thus she knew life well in theory, and preserved no innocence of mind though virginal at heart. Her intelligence wandered through all the impurities of science while her heart remained pure. Her knowledge was something amazing, fed by her passion for reading, and well served by an excellent memory. Thus, at eighteen, she was as learned as the authors of to-day ought to be before trying to write. This prodigious amount of study controlled her passions far better than a convent life, which only inflames a young girl's imagination; this

brain, crammed with undigested and unclassified information, governed the heart of a child. Such a depravity of mind, absolutely devoid of any influence on her chastity of person, would have amazed a philosopher or an observer, if any one at Nantes could have suspected the fine qualities of Mademoiselle des Touches.

The result was in inverse proportion to the cause: Félicité had no predisposition toward evil; she conceived of everything by her intelligence, but held aloof from the facts. She delighted old Faucombe, and helped him in his works, writing three books for the worthy gentleman, who believed them to be his own, for his spiritual paternity also was blind. Such severe work, out of harmony with the development of her girlhood, had its natural effect; Félicité fell ill, there was a fever in her blood, her lungs were threatened with inflammation. The doctors ordered her horse-exercise and social amusements. Mademoiselle des Touches became a splendid horsewoman, and had recovered in a few months.

At eighteen she made her appearance in the world, where she produced such a sensation that at Nantes she was never called anything but the beautiful Mademoiselle des Touches. But the adoration of which she was the object left her insensible, and she had come to this by the influence of one of the sentiments which are imperishable in a woman, however superior she may be. Snubbed by her aunt and cousins, who laughed at her studies and made fun of her distant manners, assuming that she was incapable of being attractive, Félicité aimed at being light and coquettish, in short, a woman. She had expected to find some interchange of ideas, some fascination on a level with her own lofty intelligence; she was disgusted by the commonplaces of ordinary conversation and the nonsense of flirtation; above all, she was provoked by the aristocratic airs of the military, to whom at that time everything gave way.

She had, as a matter of course, neglected the drawing-

room arts. When she found herself less considered than the dolls who could play the piano, and make themselves agreeable by singing ballads, she aspired to become a musician. She retired into deep solitude, and set to work to study unremittingly under the guidance of the best master in the town. She was rich, she sent for Steibelt to give her finishing lessons, to the great astonishment of her neighbors. This princely outlay is still remembered at Nantes. The master's stay there cost her twelve thousand francs. She became at last a consummate musician. Later, in Paris, she took lessons in harmony and counterpoint, and composed two operas, which were immensely successful, though the public never knew her secret. These operas were ostensibly the work of Conti, one of the most eminent artists of our day; but this circumstance was connected with the history of her heart, and will be explained presently. The mediocrity of provincial society wearied her so excessively, her imagination was full of such grand ideas, that she withdrew from all the drawing-rooms after reappearing for a time to eclipse all other women by the splendor of her beauty, to enjoy her triumph over the musical performers, and win the devotion of all clever people; still, after proving her power to her two cousins, and driving two lovers to desperation, she came back to her books, to her piano, to the works of Beethoven, and to old Faucombe.

In 1812 she was one-and-twenty; the archæologist accounted to her for his management of her property; and from that time forth she herself controlled her fortune, consisting of fifteen thousand francs a year from les Touches, her father's estate; twelve thousand francs, the income at that time from the lands of Faucombe, which increased by a third when the leases were renewed; besides a capital sum of three hundred thousand francs saved by her guardian. Félicité derived nothing from her country training but an apprehension of money matters, and that instinct for wise administration which perhaps restores, in the provinces, the balance against the constant tendency of capital to centre

in Paris. She withdrew her three hundred thousand francs from the bank where the archæologist had deposited them, and invested in consols just at the time of the disastrous retreat from Moscow. Thus she had thirty thousand francs a year more. When all her expenses were paid, she had a surplus of fifty thousand francs a year to be invested.

A girl of one-and-twenty, with such a power of will, was a match for a man of thirty. Her intellect had gained immense breadth and habits of criticism, which enabled her to judge sanely of men and things, art and politics. Thenceforward she purposed leaving Nantes; but old Monsieur Faucombe fell ill of the malady that carried him off. She was like a wife to the old man; she nursed him for eighteen months with the devotion of a guardian angel, and closed his eyes at the very time when Napoleon was fighting with Europe over the dead body of France. She therefore postponed her departure for Paris till the end of the war.

As a Royalist she flew to hail the return of the Bourbons to Paris. She was welcomed there by the Grandlieus, with whom she was distantly connected; but then befell the catastrophe of the 20th of March, and everything remained in suspense. She had the opportunity of seeing on the spot this last resurrection of the Empire, of admiring the *Grande Armée* which came out on the Champ de Mars, as in an arena, to salute its Cæsar before dying at Waterloo. Félicité's great and lofty soul was captivated by the magical spectacle. Political agitations and the fairy transformations of the theatrical drama, lasting for three months, and known as the hundred days, absorbed her wholly, and preserved her from any passion, in the midst of an upheaval that broke up the Royalist circle in which she had first come out. The Grandlieus followed the Bourbons to Ghent, leaving their house at Mademoiselle des Touches' service.

Félicité, who could not accept a dependent position, bought for the sum of a hundred and thirty thousand francs one of the handsomest mansions in the Rue du Mont-Blanc, where she settled on the return of the Bourbons in 1815; the

garden alone is worth two million francs now. Being accustomed to act on her own responsibility, Félicité soon took the habit of independent action, which seems the privilege of men only. In 1816 she was five-and-twenty. She knew nothing of marriage; she conceived of it only in her brain, judged of it by its causes instead of observing its effect, and saw only its disadvantages. Her superior mind rebelled against the abdication which begins the life of a married woman; she keenly felt the preciousness of independence, and had nothing but disgust for the cares of motherhood. These details are necessary to justify the anomalies that characterize Camille Maupin. She never knew father or mother, she was her own mistress from her childhood, her guardian was an old antiquary, chance placed her in the domain of science and imagination, in the literary world, instead of keeping her within the circle drawn by the futile education given to women—a mother's lectures on dress, on the hypocritical proprieties, and man-hunting graces of her sex. And so, long before she became famous, it could be seen at a glance that she had never played the doll.

Toward the end of the year 1817 Félicité des Touches perceived that her face showed symptoms not indeed of fading, but of the beginning of fatigue. She understood that her beauty would suffer from the fact of her persistent celibacy; she was bent on remaining beautiful, for at that time she prized her beauty. Knowledge warned her of the doom set by Nature on her creations, which deteriorate as much by misapplication as by ignorance of her laws. The vision of her aunt's emaciated face rose before her and made her shudder. Thus placed between marriage and passion, she determined to remain free; but she no longer scorned the homage that she met with on all hands.

At the date when this story begins she was almost the same as she had been in 1817. Eighteen years had passed over her and left her untouched; at the age of forty she might have called herself twenty-five. Thus a picture of her in 1836 will represent her as she was in 1817. Women

who know under what conditions of temperament and beauty a woman must live to resist the attacks of time, will understand how and why Félicité des Touches enjoyed such high privileges, as they study a portrait for which the most glowing colors of the palette and the richest setting must be brought into play.

Brittany offers a singular problem in the predominance of brown hair, brown eyes, and a dark complexion, in a country so close to England, where the atmospheric conditions are so nearly similar. Does the question turn on the wider one of race, or on unobserved physical influences? Scientific men will some day perhaps inquire into the cause of this peculiarity, which does not exist in the neighboring province of Normandy. Pending its solution, the strange fact lies before us that fair women are rare among the women of Brittany, who almost always have the brilliant eyes of Southerners; but instead of showing the tall figures and serpentine grace of Italy or Spain, they are usually small, short, with neat, set figures, excepting some women of the upper classes which have been crossed by aristocratic alliances.

Mademoiselle des Touches, a thoroughbred Bretonne, is of medium height, about five feet, though she looks taller. This illusion is produced by the character of her countenance, which gives her dignity. She has the complexion which is characteristic of Italian beauty, pale olive by day and white under artificial light; you might think it was animated ivory. Light glides over such a skin as over a polished surface, it glistens on it; only strong emotion can bring a faint flush to the middle of each cheek, and it disappears at once. This peculiarity gives her face the placidity of a savage. The face, long rather than oval, resembles that of some beautiful Isis in the bass-reliefs of Egina; it has the purity of a Sphinx's head, polished by desert fires, lovingly touched by the flame of the Egyptian sun. Her hair, black and thick, falls in plaited loops over her neck, like the headdress with ridged double locks of the statues

at Memphis, accentuating very finely the general severity of her features. She has a full, broad forehead, bossy at the temples, bright with its smooth surface on which the light lingers, and molded like that of a hunting Diana; a powerful, wilful brow, calm and still. The eyebrows, strongly arched, bend over eyes in which the fire sparkles now and again like that of fixed stars. The white of the eye is not bluish, nor veined with red, nor is it pure white; its texture looks horny, still it is warm in tone; the black centre has an orange ring round the edge; it is bronze set in gold—but living gold, animated bronze. The pupil is deep. It is not, as in some eyes, lined, as it were, like a mirror, reflecting the light, and making them look like the eyes of tigers and cats; it has not that terrible fixity of gaze that makes sensitive persons shiver; but this depth has infinitude, just as the brightness of mirror-eyes has finality. The gaze of the observer can sink and lose itself in that soul, which can shrink and retire as rapidly as it can flash forth from those velvet eyes. In a moment of passion Camille Maupin's eye is superb; the gold of her glance lights up the yellowish white, and the whole flashes fire; but when at rest it is dull, the torpor of deep thought often gives it a look of stupidity; and when the light of the soul is absent, the lines of the face also look sad. The lashes are short, but as black and thick-set as the hair of an ermine's tail. The lids are tawny, and netted with fine red veins, giving them at once strength and elegance, two qualities hard to combine in women. All round the eyes there is not the faintest wrinkle or stain. Here again you will think of Egyptian granite mellowed by time. Only the cheekbones, though softly rounded, are more prominent than in most women, and confirm the impression of strength stamped on the face.

Her nose, narrow and straight, has high-cut nostrils, with enough of passionate dilation to show the rosy gleam of their delicate lining; this nose is well set on to the brow, to which it is joined by an exquisite curve, and it is perfectly white to the very tip—a tip endowed with a sort of proper motion

that works wonders whenever Camille is angry, indignant, or rebellious. There especially—as Talma noted—the rage or irony of lofty souls finds expression. Rigid nostrils betray a certain shallowness. The nose of a miser never quivers, it is tightly set like his lips; everything in his face is as close shut as himself.

Camille's mouth, arched at the corners, is brightly red; the lips, full of blood, supply that living, impulsive carmine that gives them such infinite charm, and may reassure the lover who might be alarmed by the grave majesty of the face. The upper lip is thin, the furrow beneath the nose dents it low down, like a bow, which gives peculiar emphasis to her scorn. Camille has no difficulty in expressing anger. This pretty lip meets the broader red edge of a lower lip that is exquisitely kind, full of love, and carved, it might be, by Phidias, as the edge of an opened pomegranate, which it resembles in color. The chin is round and firm, a little heavy, but expressing determination, and finishing well this royal, if not goddess-like, profile. It is necessary to add that below the nose the lip is faintly shaded by a down that is wholly charming; nature would have blundered if she had not there placed that tender smoky tinge.

The ear is most delicately formed, a sign of other concealed daintiness. The bust broad, the bosom small but not flat, the hips slender but graceful. The slope of the back is magnificent, more suggestive of the Bacchus than of the Venus Callipyge. Herein we see a detail that distinguishes almost all famous women from the rest of their sex; they have in this a vague resemblance to men; they have neither the pliancy nor the freedom of line that we see in women destined by nature to be mothers; their gait is unbroken by a gentle sway. This observation is, indeed, two-edged; it has its counterpart in men whose hips have a resemblance to those of women—men who are cunning, sly, false, and cowardly.

Camille's head, instead of having a hollow at the nape

of the neck, is set on her shoulders with a swelling outline without an inward curve, an unmistakable sign of power; and this neck, in some attitudes, has folds of athletic firmness. The muscles attaching the upper arm, splendidly molded, are those of a colossal woman. The arm is powerfully modelled, ending in wrists of English slenderness and pretty delicate hands, plump and full of dimples, finished off with pink nails cut to an almond shape, and well set in the flesh. Her hands are of a whiteness which proclaims that all the body, full, firm, and solid, is of a quite different tone from her face. The cold, steadfast carriage of her head is contradicted by the ready mobility of the lips, their varying expression, and the sensitive nostrils of an artist.

Still, in spite of this exciting promise, not wholly visible to the profane, there is something provoking in the calmness of this countenance. The face is melancholy and serious rather than gracious, stamped with the sadness of constant meditation. Mademoiselle des Touches listens more than she speaks. She is alarming by her silence and that look of deep scrutiny. Nobody among really well-informed persons can ever have seen her without thinking of the real Cleopatra, the little brown woman who so nearly changed the face of the earth; but in Camille the animal is so perfect, so homogeneous, so truly leonine, that a man with anything of the Turk in him regrets the embodiment of so great a mind in such a frame, and wishes it were altogether woman. Every one fears lest he may find there the strange corruption of a diabolical soul. Do not cold analysis and positive ideas throw their light upon the passions in this unwedded soul? In her does not judgment take the place of feeling? Or, a still more terrible phenomenon, does she not feel and judge both together? Her brain being omnipotent, can she stop where other women stop? Has the intellectual power left the affections weak? Can she be gracious? Can she condescend to the pathetic trifles by which a woman busies, amuses, and interests the man she loves? Does she not crush a sentiment at once if it does not answer to the in-

finite that she apprehends and contemplates? Who can fill up the gulfs in her eyes?

We fear lest we should find in her some mysterious element of unsubdued virginity. The strength of a woman ought to be merely symbolical; we are frightened at finding it real. Camille Maupin is in some degree the living image of Schiller's Isis, hidden in the depths of the temple, at whose feet the priests found the dying gladiators who had dared to consult her. Her various "affairs," believed in by the world, and not denied by Camille herself, confirm the doubts suggested by her appearance. But perhaps she enjoys this calumny? The character of her beauty has not been without effect on her reputation; it has helped her, just as her fortune and position have upheld her in the midst of society. If a sculptor should wish to make an admirable statue of Brittany, he might copy Mademoiselle des Touches. Such a sanguine, bilious temperament alone can withstand the action of time. The perennially nourished texture of such a skin, as it were varnished, is the only weapon given to women by nature to ward off wrinkles, which in Camille are hindered also by the passivity of her features.

In 1817 this enchanting woman threw open her house to artists, famous authors, learned men, and journalists, the men to whom she was instinctively attracted. She had a drawing-room like that of Baron Gérard, where the aristocracy mingled with distinguished talents and the cream of Parisian womanhood. Mademoiselle des Touches' family connections and her fine fortune, now augmented by that of her aunt the nun, protected her in her undertaking—a difficult one in Paris—of forming a circle. Her independence was one cause of her success. Many ambitious mothers dreamed of getting her to marry a son whose wealth was disproportioned to the splendor of his armorial bearings. Certain peers of France, attracted by her eighty thousand francs a year, and tempted by her splendid house and establishment, brought the strictest and most fastidious ladies

of their family. The diplomatic world, on the lookout for wit and amusement, came and found pleasure there.

Thus Mademoiselle des Touches, the centre of so many interests, could study the different comedies which all men, even the most distinguished, are led to play by passion, avarice, or ambition. She soon saw the world as it really is, and was so fortunate as not to fall at once into such an absorbing love as engrosses a woman's intellect and faculties, and prevents her wholesome judgment. Generally a woman feels, enjoys, and judges, each in turn; hence three ages, the last coinciding with the sad period of old age. To Félicité the order was reversed. Her youth was shrouded in the snows of science, the chill of thoughtfulness. This transposition also explains the oddity of her life and the character of her talents. She was studying men at the age when most women see but one; she despised what they admire; she detected falsehood in the flatteries they accept as truth; she laughed at what makes them serious.

This contradictory state lasted a long time; it had a disastrous termination; it was her fate to find her first love newborn and tender in her heart, at an age when women are required by nature to renounce love. Her first *liaison* was kept so secret that no one ever knew of it. Félicité, like all women who believe in the common-sense of their feelings, was led to count on finding a beautiful soul in a beautiful body; she fell in love with a face and discovered all the foolishness of a lady's man who thought of her merely as a woman. It took her some time to get over her disgust and this mad connection. Another man guessed her trouble, and consoled her without looking for any return, or at any rate he concealed his purpose. Félicité thought she had found the magnanimity of heart and mind that the dandy had lacked. This man had one of the most original intellects of the day. He himself wrote under a pseudonym, and his first works revealed him as an admirer of Italy. Félicité must needs travel or perpetuate the only form of ignorance in which she remained. This man, a sceptic and

a scoffer, took Félicité to study the land of Art. This famous "Anonymous" may be regarded as Camille Maupin's teacher and creator. He reduced her vast information to order, he added to it a knowledge of the masterpieces of which Italy is full, and gave her that subtle and ingenious tone, epigrammatic and yet deep, which is characteristic of his talent—always a little eccentric in its expression—but modified in Camille Maupin by the delicate feeling and the ingenious turn natural to women; he inoculated her with a taste for the works of English and German literature, and made her learn the two languages while travelling.

At Rome, in 1820, Mademoiselle des Touches found herself deserted for an Italian. But for this disaster she might never have become famous. Napoleon said that Misfortune was midwife to Genius. This event gave Mademoiselle des Touches at once and forever the scorn of mankind which is her great strength. Félicité was dead and Camille was born.

She returned to Paris in the company of Conti, the great musician, for whom she wrote the libretti of two operas; but she had no illusions left, and became, though the world did not know it, a sort of female Don Juan—without either debts or conquests. Encouraged by success, she published the two volumes of dramas which immediately placed Camille Maupin among the anonymous celebrities. She told the story of her betrayed love in an admirable little romance, one of the masterpieces of the time. This book, a dangerous example, was compared, and on a level, with "Adolphe," a horrible lament, of which the counterpart was found in Camille's tale. The delicate nature of her literary disguise is not yet fully understood; some refined intelligences still see nothing in it but the magnanimity that subjects a man to criticism and screens a woman from fame by allowing her to remain unknown.

In spite of herself, her reputation grew every day, as much by the influence of her *Salon* as for her repartees, the soundness of her judgment, and the solidity of her acquirements. She was regarded as an authority, her witti-

cisms were repeated, she could not abdicate the functions with which Parisian society invested her. She became a recognized exception. The fashionable world bowed to the talent and the wealth of this strange girl; it acknowledged and sanctioned her independence; women admired her gifts, and men her beauty. Indeed, her conduct was always ruled by social proprieties. Her friendships seemed to be entirely Platonic. There was nothing of the authoress—the female author—about her; as a woman of the world Mademoiselle des Touches is delightful—weak at appropriate moments, indolent, coquettish, devoted to dress, charmed with the trivialities that appeal to women and poets.

She perfectly understood that after Madame de Stael there was no place in this century for a Sappho, and that no Ninon could exist in Paris when there were no grand *Seigneurs*, no voluptuous Court. She is the Ninon of intellect; she adores art and artists, she goes from the poet to the musician, from the sculptor to the prose-writer. She is full of a noble generosity that verges on credulity, so ready is she to pity misfortune and to disdain the fortunate. Since 1830 she has lived in a chosen circle of proved friends, who truly love and esteem each other. She dwells far removed from such turmoil as Madame de Stael's, and not less far from political conflict; and she makes great fun of Camille Maupin as the younger brother of George Sand, of whom she speaks as "Brother Cain," for this new glory has killed her own. Mademoiselle des Touches admires her happier rival with angelic readiness without any feeling of jealousy or covert envy.

Until the time when this story opens she had led the happiest life conceivable for a woman who is strong enough to take care of herself. She had come to les Touches five or six times between 1817 and 1834. Her first visit had been made just after her first disenchantment, in 1818. Her house at les Touches was uninhabitable; she sent her steward to Guérande, and took his little house at les

Touches. As yet she had no suspicion of her coming fame; she was sad, she would see no one; she wanted to contemplate herself, as it were, after this great catastrophe. She wrote to a lady in Paris, a friend, explaining her intentions, and giving instructions for furniture to be sent for les Touches. The things came by ship to Nantes, were transshipped to a smaller boat for le Croisic, and thence were carried, not without difficulty, across the sands to les Touches. She sent for workmen from Paris, and settled herself at les Touches, which she particularly liked. She meant to meditate there on the events of life, as in a little private Chartreuse.

At the beginning of winter she returned to Paris. Then the little town of Guérande was torn by diabolical curiosity; nothing was talked of but the Asiatic luxury of Mademoiselle des Touches. The notary, her agent, gave tickets to admit visitors to les Touches, and people came from Batz, from le Croisic, and from Savenay. This curiosity produced in two years the enormous sum for the gatekeeper and gardener of seventeen francs.

Mademoiselle did not come there again till two years later, on her return from Italy, and arrived by le Croisic. For some time no one knew that she was at Guérande, and with her Conti the composer. Her appearance at intervals did not greatly excite the curiosity of the little town of Guérande. Her steward and the notary at most had been in the secret of Camille Maupin's fame. By this time, however, new ideas had made some little progress at Guérande, and several persons knew of Mademoiselle des Touches' double existence. The postmaster got letters addressed to "Camille Maupin, aux Touches."

At last the veil was rent. In a district so essentially Catholic, old-world, and full of prejudices, the strange life led by this illustrious and unmarried woman could not fail to start the rumors which had frightened the Abbé Grimont; it could never be understood; she seemed an anomaly.

Félicité was not alone at les Touches; she had a guest. This visitor was Claude Vignon, the haughty and contemptuous writer who, though he has never published anything but criticism, has impressed the public and literary circles with an idea of his superiority. Félicité, who for the last seven years had made this writer welcome, as she had a hundred others—authors, journalists, artists, and people of fashion—who knew his inelastic temperament, his idleness, his utter poverty, his carelessness, and his disgust at things in general, seemed by her behavior to him to wish to marry him. She explained her conduct, incomprehensible to her friends, by her ambition and the horror she felt of growing old; she wanted to place the rest of her life in the hands of a superior man for whom her fortune might be a stepping-stone, and who would uphold her importance in the literary world. So she had carried off Claude Vignon from Paris to les Touches, as an eagle takes a kid in his talons, to study him and take some vehement step; but she was deceiving both Calyste and Claude—she was not thinking of marriage. She was in the most violent throes that can convulse a soul so firm as hers, for she found herself the dupe of her own intellect, and saw her life illuminated too late by the sunshine of love, glowing as it glows in the heart of a girl of twenty.

Now for a picture of Camille's "Chartreuse."

At a few hundred paces from Guérande the *terra firma* of Brittany ends, and the salt marshes and sandhills begin. A rugged road, to which vehicles are unknown, leads down a ravine to the desert of sands left by the sea as neutral ground between the waters and the land. This desert consists of barren hills, of "pans" of various sizes edged with a ridge of clay, in which the salt is collected, of the creek which divides the mainland from the island of le Croisic. Though in geography le Croisic is a peninsula, as it is attached to Brittany only by the strand between it and the Bourg de Batz, a shifting bottom which it is very difficult to cross, it may be regarded as an island. At an angle where

the road from le Croisic to Guérande joins the road on the mainland, stands a country house, inclosed in a large garden remarkable for its wrung and distorted pine-trees—some spreading parasol-like at the top, others stripped of their boughs, and all showing red scarred trunks where the bark has been torn away. These trees, martyrs to the storm, growing literally in spite of wind and tide, prepare the mind for the melancholy and strange spectacle of the salt marshes, and the sandhills looking like solidified waves.

The house, well built of schistose stone and cement held together by courses of granite, has no pretensions to architecture; the eye sees only a bare wall, regularly pierced by the windows; those on the first floor have large panes, on the ground floor small quarries. Above the first floor there are lofts, under an enormously high-pointed roof, with a gable at each end, and two large dormers on each side. Under the angle of each gable a window looks out, like a Cyclops' eye, to the west over the sea, to the east at Guérande. One side of the house faces the Guérande road; the other the waste over which le Croisic is seen, and beyond that the open sea. A little stream escapes through an opening in the garden wall on the side by the road to le Croisic, which it crosses, and is soon lost in the sand, or in the little pool of salt water inclosed by the sandhills and marshland, being left there by the arm of the sea.

A few fathoms of roadway, constructed in this break in the soil, leads to the house. It is entered through a gate; the courtyard is surrounded by unpretentious rural outhouses—a stable, a coach-house, a gardener's cottage with a poultry yard and sheds adjoining, of more use to the gatekeeper than to his mistress. The gray tones of this building harmonize delightfully with the scenery it stands in. The grounds are an oasis in this desert, on the edge of which the traveller has passed a mud-hovel, where custom-house officers keep guard. The house, with no lands, or rather of which the lands lie in the district of Guérande, derives an income of ten thousand francs from the marshes, and from farms

scattered about the mainland. This was the fief of les Touches, deprived of its feudal revenues by the Revolution. Les Touches is still a property; the marshmen still speak of the *Château*, and they would talk of the *Lord* if the owner were not a woman. When Félicité restored les Touches, she was too much of an artist to think of altering the desolate-looking exterior which gives this lonely building the appearance of a prison. Only the gate was improved by the addition of two brick piers with an architrave, under which a carriage can drive in. The courtyard was planted.

The arrangement of the ground floor is common to most country houses built a hundred years ago. The dwelling was evidently constructed on the ruins of a little *castel* perched there as a link connecting le Croisic and Batz with Guérande, and lording it over the marshes. A hall had been contrived at the foot of the stairs. The first room is a large wainscoted anteroom where Félicité has a billiard-table; next comes an immense drawing-room with six windows, two of which, at the gable-end, form doors leading to the garden, down ten steps, corresponding in the arrangement of the room with the door into the billiard-room, and that into the dining-room. The kitchen, at the other end, communicates with the dining-room through the pantry. The staircase is between the billiard-room and the kitchen, which formerly had a door into the hall; this Mademoiselle des Touches closed, and opened one to the courtyard.

The loftiness and spaciousness of the rooms enabled Camille to treat this ground floor with noble simplicity. She was careful not to introduce any elaboration of detail. The drawing-room, painted gray, has old mahogany furniture with green silk cushions, white cotton window curtains bordered with green, two consoles, and a round table; in the middle is a carpet with a large pattern in squares; over the huge chimney-place are an immense mirror, and a clock representing Apollo's car, between candelabra of the style of the Empire. The billiard-room has gray cotton curtains, bordered with green, and two divans. The dining-room furni-

ture consists of four large mahogany sideboards, a table, twelve mahogany chairs with horse-hair seats, and some magnificent engravings by Audran in mahogany frames. From the middle of the ceiling hangs an elegant lamp such as were usual on the staircases of fine houses, with two lights. All the ceilings and the beams supporting them are painted to imitate wood. The old staircase, of wood with a heavy balustrade, is carpeted with green from top to bottom.

On the first floor were two sets of rooms divided by the staircase. Camille chose for her own those which look over the marshes, the sandhills, and the sea, arranging them as a little sitting-room, a bedroom, a dressing-room, and a study. On the other side of the house she contrived two bedrooms, each with a dressing-closet and anteroom. The servants' rooms are above. The two spare rooms had at first only the most necessary furniture. The artistic luxuries for which she had sent to Paris she reserved for her own rooms. In this gloomy and melancholy dwelling, looking out on that gloomy and melancholy landscape, she wanted to have the most fantastic creations of art. Her sitting room is hung with fine Gobelin tapestry, set in wonderfully carved frames. The windows are draped with heavy antique stuffs, a splendid brocade with a doubly shot ground, gold and red, yellow and green, falling in many bold folds, edged with royal fringes and tassels worthy of the most splendid baldachins of the Church. The room contains a cabinet which her agent found for her, worth seven or eight thousand francs now, a table of carved ebony, a writing bureau, brought from Venice, with a hundred drawers, inlaid with arabesques of ivory, and some beautiful Gothic furniture. There are pictures and statuettes, the best that an artist friend could select in the old curiosity shops, where the dealers never suspected in 1818 the price their treasures would afterward fetch. On her tables stand fine Chinese vases of grotesque designs. The carpet is Persian, smuggled in across the sandhills.

Her bedroom is in the Louis XV. style, and a perfectly exact imitation. Here we have the carved wooden bedstead,

painted white, with the arched head and side, and figures of Loves throwing flowers, the lower part stuffed and upholstered in brocaded silk, the crown above decorated with four bunches of feathers; the walls are hung with Indian chintz draped with silk cords and knots. The fireplace is finished with rustic work, the clock of ormolu, between two large vases of the choicest blue Sèvres mounted in gilt copper; the mirror is framed to match. The Pompadour toilet-table has its lace hangings and its glass; and then there is all the fanciful small furniture, the *duchesses*, the couch, the little formal settee, the easy-chair with a quilted back, the lacquer screen, the curtains of silk to match the chairs, lined with pink satin and draped with thick ropes; the carpet woven at la Savonnerie—in short, all the elegant, rich, sumptuous, and fragile things among which the ladies of the eighteenth century made love.

The study, absolutely modern, in contrast with the gallant suggestiveness of the days of Louis XV., has pretty mahogany furniture. The book-shelves are full; it looks like a boudoir; there is a divan in it. It is crowded with the dainty trifles that women love; books that lock up, boxes for handkerchiefs and gloves; pictured lamp-shades, statuettes, Chinese grotesques, writing-cases, two or three albums, paper-weights, in short, every fashionable toy. The curious visitor notes with uneasy surprise a pair of pistols, a nargile, a riding-whip, a hammock, a pipe, a fowling-piece, a blouse, some tobacco, and a soldier's knapsack—a motley collection characteristic of Félicité.

Every lofty soul on looking round must be struck by the peculiar beauty of the landscape that spreads its breadth beyond the grounds, the last vegetation of the Continent. Those dismal squares of brackish water, divided by little white dikes on which the marshman walks, all in white, to rake out and collect the salt and heap it up; that tract over which salt vapors rise, forbidding birds to fly across, while they at the same time choke every attempt at plant-life; those sands where the eye can find no comfort but in the stiff ever-

green leaves of a small plant with rose-colored flowers and in the Carthusian pink; that pool of sea-water, the sand of the dunes, and the view of le Croisic—a miniature town dropped like Venice into the sea; and beyond, the immensity of ocean, tossing a fringe of foam over the granite reefs to emphasize their wild forms—this scene elevates while it saddens the spirit, the effect always produced in the end by anything sublime which makes us yearn regretfully for unknown things that the soul apprehends at unattainable heights. Indeed, these wild harmonies have no charm for any but lofty natures and great sorrows. This desert, not unbroken, where the sunbeams are sometimes reflected from the water and the sand, whiten the houses of Batz, and ripple over the roofs of le Croisic with a pitiless dazzling glare, would absorb Camille for days at a time. She rarely turned to the delightful green views, the thickets, and flowery hedges that garland Guérande like a bride, with flowers and posies and veils and festoons. She was suffering dreadful and unknown misery.

As Calyste saw the weather-cocks of the two gables peeping above the furze-bushes of the highroad and the gnarled heads of the fir-trees, the air seemed to him lighter; to him Guérande was a prison, his life was at les Touches. Who cannot understand the attractions it held for a simple-minded lad? His love, like that of Cherubino, which had brought him to the feet of a personage who had been a great idea to him before being a woman, naturally survived her inexplicable rejections. This feeling, which is rather the desire for love than love itself, had no doubt failed to elude the inexorable analysis of Camille Maupin, and hence perhaps her repulses, a nobleness of mind misunderstood by Calyste. And, then, the marvels of modern civilization seemed all the more dazzling here by contrast with Guérande, where the poverty of the Guénics was considered splendor. Here, spread before the ravished eyes of this ignorant youth, who had never seen anything but the yellow broom of Brittany

and the heaths of la Vendée, lay the Parisian glories of a new world; just as here he heard an unknown and sonorous language. Calyste here listened to the poetical tones of the finest music, the amazing music of the nineteenth century, in which melody and harmony vie with each other as equal powers, and singing and orchestration have achieved incredible perfection. He here saw the works of the most prodigal painting—that of the French school of to-day, the inheritor of Italy, Spain, and Flanders, in which talent has become so common that our eyes and hearts, weary of so much talent, cry out loudly for a genius. He here read those works of imagination, those astounding creations of modern literature, which produce their fullest effect on a fresh young heart. In short, our grand nineteenth century rose before him in all its magnificence as a whole—its criticism, its struggles for every kind of renovation, its vast experiments, almost all measured by the standard of the giant who nursed its infancy in his flag, and sang it hymns to an accompaniment of the terrible bass of cannon.

Initiated by Félicité into all this grandeur, which perhaps escapes the ken of those who put it on the stage and are its makers, Calyste satisfied at les Touches the love of the marvellous that is so strong at his age, and that guileless admiration, the first love of a growing man, which is so wroth with criticism. It is so natural that flame should fly upward! He heard the light Parisian banter, the graceful irony which revealed to him what French wit should be, and awoke in him a thousand ideas that had been kept asleep by the mild torpor of home life. To him Mademoiselle des Touches was the mother of his intelligence, a mother with whom he might be in love without committing a crime. She was so kind to him: a woman is always adorably kind to a man in whom she has inspired a passion, even though she should not seem to share it. At this moment Félicité was giving him music lessons. To him the spacious rooms on the ground floor, looking all the larger by reason of the skilful arrangement of the lawns and shrubs in the little park; the staircase, lined

with masterpieces of Italian patience—carved wood, Venetian and Florentine mosaics, bass-reliefs in ivory and marble, curious toys made to the order of the fairies of the Middle Ages; the upper rooms, so cosey, so dainty, so voluptuously artistic, were all informed and living with a light, a spirit, an atmosphere, that were supernatural, indefinable, and strange. The modern world with its poetry was in strong contrast to the solemn patriarchal world of Guérande, and the two systems here were face to face. On one hand the myriad effects of art; on the other the simplicity of wild Brittany. No one, then, need ask why the poor boy, as weary as his mother was of the subtleties of *mouche*, always felt a qualm as he entered this house, as he rang the bell, as he crossed the yard. It is to be observed that these presentiments cease to agitate men of riper growth, inured to the mishaps of life, whom nothing can surprise, and who are prepared for everything.

As he went in, Calyste heard the sound of the piano; he thought that Camille Maupin was in the drawing-room; but on entering the billiard-room he could no longer hear it. Camille was playing, no doubt, on the little upright piano, brought for her from England by Conti, which stood in the little drawing-room above. As he mounted the stairs, where the thick carpet completely deadened the sound of footsteps, Calyste went more and more slowly. He perceived that this music was something extraordinary. Félicité was playing to herself alone; she was talking to herself. Instead of going in, the young man sat down on a Gothic settle with a green velvet cushion on the landing, beneath the window, which was artistically framed in carved wood stained with walnut juice and varnished.

Nothing could be more mysteriously melancholy than Camille's improvisation; it might have been the cry of a soul wailing a *De profundis* to God from the depths of the grave. The young lover knew it for the prayer of love in despair, the tenderness of resigned grief, the sighing of controlled anguish. Camille was amplifying, varying, and changing the introduction to the *cavatina*, "*Grâce pour*

*toi, grâce pour moi,*" from the fourth act of "Robert le Diable." Suddenly she began to sing the *scena* in heart-rending tones, and broke off. Calyste went in and saw the reason of this abrupt ending. Poor Camille Maupin, beautiful Félicité, turned to him without affectation, her face bathed in tears, took out her handkerchief to wipe them away, and said simply: "Good-morning."

She was charming in her morning dress; on her head was one of the red chenille nets at that time in fashion, from which the shining curls of her black hair fell on her neck. A very short pelisse formed a modern Greek tunic, showing below it cambric trousers with embroidered frills, and the prettiest scarlet and gold Turkish slippers.

"What is the matter?" asked Calyste.

"He has not come back," she replied, standing up at the window, and looking out over the sands, the creek, and the marshes.

This reply accounted for her costume. Camille, it would seem, was expecting Claude Vignon, and she was fretted as a woman who had wasted her pains. A man of thirty would have seen this. Calyste only saw that she was unhappy.

"You are anxious?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied, with a melancholy that this boy could not fathom. Calyste was hastily leaving the room.

"Well, where are you going?"

"To find him."

"Dear child!" said she, taking his hand, and drawing him to her with one of those tearful looks which to a young soul is the highest reward. "Are you mad? Where do you think you can find him on this shore?"

"I will find him."

"Your mother will suffer mortal anguish. Besides—stay. Come, I insist upon it," and she made him sit down on the divan. "Do not break your heart about me. These tears that you see are the tears we take pleasure in. There is a faculty in women which men have not: that of abandoning

ourselves to our nerves by indulging our feelings to excess. By imagining certain situations, and giving way to the idea, we work ourselves up to tears, sometimes into a serious condition and real illness. A woman's fancies are not the sport of the mind merely, but of the heart.—You have come at the right moment; solitude is bad for me. I am not deluded by the wish he felt to go without me to study le Croisic and its rocks, the Bourg de Batz, and its sands and salt-marshes. I knew he would spend several days over it instead of one. He wished to leave us two alone; he is jealous, or rather he is acting jealousy. You are young; you are handsome."

"Why did you not tell me sooner? Must I come no more?" asked Calyste, failing to restrain a tear that rolled down his cheek, and touched Félicité deeply.

"You are an angel!" she exclaimed.

Then she lightly sang Mathilde's strain *Restez* out of "William Tell," to efface all gravity from this grand reply of a princess to her subject.

"He thus hopes," she added, "to make me believe in a greater love for me than he feels. He knows all the regard I feel for him," she went on, looking narrowly at Calyste, "but he is perhaps humiliated to find himself my inferior in this. Possibly, too, he has formed some suspicions of you, and thinks he will take us by surprise.—But, even if he is guilty of nothing worse than of wishing to enjoy the delights of this expedition in the wilds without me, of refusing to let me share his excursions, and the ideas the scenes may arouse in him, of leaving me in mortal alarms—is not that enough? His great brain has no more love for me than the musician had, the wit, the soldier. Sterne is right: names have a meaning, and mine is the bitterest mockery. I shall die without ever finding in a man such love as I have in my heart, such poetry as I have in my soul."

She sat with her arms hanging limp, her head thrown back on the cushion, her eyes dull with concentrated thought, and fixed on a flower in the carpet. The sufferings of superior minds are mysteriously grand and impos-

ing; they reveal immense expanses of the soul, to which the spectator's fancy adds yet greater breadth. Such souls share in the privilege of royalty, whose affections cling to a nation, and then strike a whole world.

"Why did you—?" began Calyste, who could not finish the sentence. Camille Maupin's beautiful burning hand was laid on his, and eloquently stopped him.

"Nature has forsworn her laws by granting me five or six years of added youth. I have repelled you out of selfishness. Sooner or later age would have divided us.—I am thirteen years older than he is, and that is quite enough!"

"You will still be beautiful when you are sixty!" cried Calyste heroically.

"God grant it!" she replied with a smile. "But, my dear child, I intend to love him. In spite of his insensibility, his lack of imagination, his cowardly indifference, and the envy that consumes him, I believe that there is greatness under those husks; I hope to galvanize his heart, to save him from himself, to attach him to me. . . . Alas! I have the brain to see clearly while my heart is blind."

She was appallingly clear as to herself. She could suffer and analyze her suffering, as Cuvier and Dupuytren could explain to their friends the fatal progress of their diseases and the steady advance of death. Camille Maupin knew passion as these two learned men knew anatomy.

"I came here on purpose to form an opinion about him; he is already bored. He misses Paris, as I told him; he is homesick for something to criticise. Here there is no author to be plucked, no system to be undermined, no poet to be driven to despair; he dares not here rush into some excess in which he could unburden himself of the weight of thought. Alas! my love perhaps is not true enough to refresh his brain. In short, I cannot intoxicate him!—To-night you and he must get drunk together; I shall say I am ailing, and stay in my room; I shall know if I am mistaken."

Calyste turned as red as a cherry, red from his chin to his hair, and his ears tingled with the glow.

"Good God!" she exclaimed, "and here am I depraving your maiden innocence without thinking of what I was doing! Forgive me, Calyste. When you love you will know that you would try to set the Seine on fire to give the least pleasure to 'the object of your affections,' as the fortune-tellers say."

She paused.

"There are some proud and logical spirits," she went on, "who at a certain age can exclaim, 'If I could live my life again, I would do everything the same.' Now I—and I do not think myself weak—I say, 'I would be such a woman as your mother.'

"To have a Calyste of my own! What happiness! If I had had the greatest fool on earth for a husband, I should have been a humble and submissive wife. And yet I have not sinned against society, I have only hurt myself. Alas! dear child, a woman can no longer go into society unprotected excepting in what is called a primitive state. The affections that are not in harmony with social or natural laws, the affections which are not binding, in short, evade us. If I am to suffer for suffering's sake, I might as well be useful. What do I care for the children of my Faucombe cousins, who are no longer Faucombes, whom I have not seen for twenty years, and who married merchants only! You are a son who has cost me none of the cares of motherhood; I shall leave you my fortune, and you will be happy, at any rate so far as that is concerned, by my act, dear jewel of beauty and sweetness, which nothing should ever change or fade!"

As she spoke these words in a deep voice, her eyelids fell that he should not read her eyes.

"You have never chosen to accept anything from me," said Calyste. "I shall restore your fortune to your heirs."

"Child!" said Camille in her rich tones, while the tears fell down her cheeks, "can nothing save me from myself?"

"You have a story to tell me, and a letter to—" the generous boy began, to divert her from her distress. But she interrupted him before he could finish his sentence.

"You are right. I must, above all things, keep my word. It was too late yesterday; but we shall have time enough to-day, it would seem," she said in a half-playful, half-bitter tone. "To fulfil my promise, I will sit where I can look down the road to the cliffs."

Calyste placed a deep Gothic armchair where she could look out in that direction, and opened the window. Camille Maupin, who shared the Oriental tastes of the more illustrious writer of her own sex, took out a magnificent Persian nargile that an ambassador had given her; she filled it with patchouli leaves, cleaned the mouthpiece, scented the quill before she inserted it—it would serve her but once—put a match to the dried leaves, placed the handsome instrument of pleasure, with its long-necked bowl of blue-and-gold enamel, at no great distance, and then rang for tea.

"If you would like a cigarette?—Ah! I always forget that you do not smoke. Such immaculateness as yours is rare! I feel as though only the fingers of an Eve fresh from the hand of God ought to caress the downy satin of your cheeks."

Calyste reddened and sat down on a stool; he did not observe the deep emotion that made Camille blush.

"The person from whom I yesterday received this letter, and who will perhaps be here to-morrow, is the Marquise de Rochefide," said Félicité. "After getting his eldest daughter married to a Portuguese grandee who has settled in France, old Rochefide, whose family is not so old as yours, wanted to connect his son with the highest nobility, so as to procure for him a peerage he had failed to obtain for himself. The Comtesse de Montcornet told him that in the department of the Orne there was a certain Mademoiselle Béatrix Maximilienne Rose de Casteran, the youngest daughter of the Marquis de Casteran, who wanted to get his two daughters off his hands without any money, so as to leave his

whole fortune to his son, the Comte de Casteran. The Casterans, it would seem, are descended direct from Adam.

"Béatrix, born and brought up in the château of Casteran, at the time of her marriage in 1828 was twenty years of age. She was remarkable for what you provincials call eccentricity, which is simply a superior mind, enthusiasm, a sense of the beautiful, and a fervid feeling for works of art. Take the word of a poor woman who has trusted herself on these slopes, there is nothing more perilous for a woman; if she tries them, she arrives where you see me, and where the Marquise is—in an abyss. Men only have the stuff that can be a support on the edge of those precipices, a strength which we lack, or which makes us monsters if we have it.

"Her old grandmother, the dowager Marquise de Casteran, was delighted to see her marry a man whose superior she would certainly be in birth and mind. The Rochefides did everything extremely well, Béatrix could but be satisfied; and in the same way Rochefide had every reason to be pleased with the Casterans, who, as connected with the Verneuils, the d'Esgrignons, and the Troisvilles, obtained the peerage for their son-in-law as one of the last batch made by Charles X., though it was annulled by a decree of the Revolution of July.

"Rochefide is a fool; however, he began by having a son; and as he gave his wife no respite, and almost killed her with his company, she soon had enough of him. The early days of married life are a rock of danger for small minds as for great passions. Rochefide, being a fool, mistook his wife's ignorance for coldness; he regarded Béatrix as a lymphatic creature—she is very fair—and thereupon lulled himself in perfect security, and led a bachelor life, trusting to the Marquise's supposed coldness, her pride, her haughtiness, and the splendor of a style of living which surrounds a woman in Paris with a thousand barriers. When you go there you will understand what I mean. Those who hoped to take advantage of his easy

indifference would say to him, 'You are a lucky fellow. You have a heartless wife, whose passions will all be in her brain; she is content with shining; her fancies are purely artistic; her jealousy and wishes will be amply satisfied if she can form a *salon* where all the wits and talents meet; she will have debauches of music, orgies of literature.' —And the husband took in all this nonsense with which simpletons are stuffed in Paris.

"At the same time, Rochefide is not a common idiot; he has as much vanity and pride as a clever man, with this difference, that clever men assume some modesty and become cats; they coax to be coaxed in return; whereas Rochefide has a fine flourishing conceit, rosy and plump, that admires itself in public, and is always smiling. His vanity rolls in the stable, and feeds noisily from the manger, tugging out the hay. He has faults such as are known only to those who are in a position to judge him intimately, which are noticeable only in the shade and mystery of private life, while in society and to society the man seems charming. Rochefide must have been intolerable the moment he fancied that his hearth and home were threatened; for his is that cunning and squalid jealousy that is brutal when it is roused, cowardly for six months, and murderous the seventh. He thought he deceived his wife, and he feared her—two reasons for tyranny if the day should come when he discerned that his wife was so merciful as to affect indifference to his infidelities.

"I have analyzed his character to explain Béatrix's conduct. The Marquise used to admire me greatly; but there is but one step from admiration to jealousy. I have one of the most remarkable *salons* of Paris; she wished to have one, and tried to win away my circle. I have not the art of keeping those who wish to leave me. She has won such superficial persons as are everybody's friends from vacuity, and whose object is always to go out of a room as soon as they have come in; but she has not had time to make a circle. At that time I supposed that she was consumed with the

desire of any kind of celebrity. Nevertheless, she had some greatness of soul, a royal pride, ideas, and a wonderful gift of apprehending and understanding everything. She will talk of metaphysics and of music, of theology and of painting. You will see her as a woman what we saw her as a bride; but she is not without a little conceit; she gives herself too much the air of knowing difficult things—Chinese or Hebrew, of having ideas about hieroglyphics, and of being able to explain the papyrus that wraps a mummy.

"Béatrix is one of those fair women by whom fair Eve would look like a negress. She is as tall and straight as a taper, and as white as the holy wafer; she has a long pointed face, and a very variable complexion, to-day as colorless as cambric, to-morrow dull and mottled under the skin with a myriad tiny specks, as though the blood had left dust there in the course of the night. Her forehead is grand, but a little too bold; her eyes, pale aquamarine-tinted, floating in the white cornea under colorless eyebrows and indolent lids. There is often a dark circle round her eyes. Her nose, curved to a quarter of a circle, is pinched at the nostrils and full of refinement, but it is impertinent. She has the Austrian mouth, the upper lip thicker than the lower, which has a scornful droop. Her pale cheeks only flush under some very strong emotion. Her chin is rather fat; mine is not thin; and perhaps I ought not to tell you that women with a fat chin are exacting in love affairs. She has one of the most beautiful figures I ever saw; a back of dazzling whiteness, which used to be very flat, but which now, I am told, has filled out and grown dimpled; but the bust is not so fine as the shoulders, her arms are still thin. However, she has a mien and a freedom of manner which redeem all her defects and throw her beauties into relief. Nature has bestowed on her that air, as of a princess, which can never be acquired, which becomes her, and at once reveals the woman of birth; it is in harmony with the slender hips of exquisite form, with the prettiest foot in the world, and the

abundant angel-like hair, resembling waves of light, such as Girodet's brush has so often painted.

"Without being faultlessly beautiful or pretty, when she chooses she can make an indelible impression. She has only to dress in cherry-colored velvet, with lace frillings, and red roses in her hair, to be divine. If on any pretext Béatrix could dress in the costume of a time when women wore pointed stomachers laced with ribbon, rising, slender and fragile-looking, from the padded fulness of brocade skirts set in thick deep plaits; when their heads were framed in starched ruffs, and their arms hidden under slashed sleeves with lace ruffles, out of which the hand appeared like the pistil from the cup of a flower; when their hair was tossed back in a thousand little curls over a knot held up by a network of jewels, Béatrix would appear as a successful rival to any of the ideal beauties you may see in that array."

Félicité showed Calyste a good copy of Mieris' picture in which a lady in white satin stands singing with a gentleman of Brabant, while a negro pours old Spanish wine into a glass with a foot, and a housekeeper is arranging some biscuits.

"Fair women," she went on, "have the advantage over us dark women of the most delightful variety; you may be fair in a hundred ways, but there is only one way of being dark. Fair women are more womanly than we are; we dark Frenchwomen are too like men. Well," she added, "do not be falling in love with Béatrix on the strength of the portrait I have given you, exactly like some prince in the 'Arabian Nights.' Too late in the day, my dear boy! But be comforted. With her the bones are for the first comer."

She spoke with meaning; the admiration expressed in the youth's face was evidently more for the picture than for the painter whose touch had missed its purpose.

"In spite of her being a blonde," she resumed, "Béatrix has not the delicacy of her coloring; the lines are severe, she is elegant and hard; she has the look of a strictly accurate drawing, and you might fancy she had southern fires in her soul. She is a flaming angel, slowly drying

up. Her eyes look thirsty. Her front face is the best; in profile her face looks as if it had been flattened between two doors. You will see if I am wrong.

"This is what led to our being such intimate friends: For three years, from 1828 to 1831, Béatrix, while enjoying the last gayeties of the Restoration, wandering through drawing-rooms, going to court, gracing the fancy-dress balls at the Elysée Bourbon, was judging men, things, and events from the heights of her intellect. Her mind was fully occupied. This first bewilderment at seeing the world kept her heart dormant, and it remained torpid under the first startling experiences of marriage—a baby—a confinement, and all the business of motherhood, which I cannot bear; I am not a woman so far as that is concerned. To me children are unendurable; they bring a thousand sorrows and incessant anxieties. I must say that I regard it as one of the blessings of modern society of which that hypocrite Jean-Jacques deprived us, that we were free to be or not to be mothers. Though I am not the only woman that thinks this, I am the only one to say it.

"During the storm of 1830 and 1831 Béatrix went to her husband's country house, where she was as much bored as a saint in his stall in Paradise. On her return to Paris, the Marquise thought, and perhaps rightly, that the Revolution, which in the eyes of most people was purely political, would be a moral revolution too. The world to which she belonged had failed to reconstitute itself during the unlooked-for fifteen years of triumph under the Restoration, so it must crumble away under the steady battering ram of the middle class. She had understood Monsieur Lainé's great words, 'Kings are departing.' This opinion, I suspect, was not without its influence on her conduct.

"She sympathized intellectually with the new doctrines which, for three years after that July, swarmed into life like flies in the sunshine, and which turned many women's heads; but, like all the nobility, though she thought the new ideas magnificent, she wished to save the nobility. Finding

no opening now for personal superiority, seeing the uppermost class again setting up the speechless opposition it had already shown to Napoleon—which, during the dominion of actions and facts, was the only attitude it could take, whereas, in a time of moral transition, it was equivalent to retiring from the contest—she preferred a happy life to this mute antagonism.

"When we began to breathe a little, the Marquise met at my house the man with whom I had thought to end my days—Gennaro Conti, the great composer, of Neapolitan parentage, but born at Marseilles. Conti is a very clever fellow, and has gifts as a composer, though he can never rise to the highest rank. If we had not Meyerbeer and Rossini, he might perhaps have passed for a genius. He has this advantage over them, that he is as a singer what Paganini is on the violin, Liszt on the piano, Taglioni as a dancer—in short, what the famous Garat was, of whom he reminds those who ever heard that singer. It is not a voice, my dear boy, it is a soul. When that singing answers to certain ideas, certain indescribable moods in which a woman sometimes finds herself, if she hears Gennaro she is lost.—The Marquise fell madly in love with him and won him from me. It was excessively provincial, but fair warfare. She gained my esteem and friendship by her conduct toward me. She fancied I was the woman to fight for my possession; she could not tell that in my eyes the most ridiculous thing in the world under such circumstances is the subject of the contest. She came to see me. The woman, proud as she is, was so much in love that she betrayed her secret and left me mistress of her fate. She was quite charming; in my eyes she remained a woman and a marquise.

"I may tell you, my friend, that women are sometimes bad; but they have a secret greatness which men will never be able to appreciate. And so, as I may wind up my affairs as a woman on the brink of old age, which is awaiting me, I will tell you that I had been faithful to Conti, that I should have continued faithful till death, and that nevertheless I

knew him thoroughly. He has apparently a delightful nature, at bottom he is detestable. In matters of feeling he is a charlatan.

"There are men, like Nathan, of whom I have spoken to you, who are charlatans on the surface but honest. Such men lie to themselves. Perched on stilts, they fancy that they are on their feet, and play their tricks with a sort of innocence; their vanity is in their blood; they are born actors, swaggerers, grotesquely funny like a Chinese jar; they might even laugh at themselves. Their personal impulses are generous, and, like the gaudiness of Murat's royal costume, they attract danger.

"But Conti's rascality will never be known to any one but his mistress. He has as an artist that famous Italian jealousy which led Carlone to assassinate Piola, and cost Paesiello a stiletto thrust. This terrible envy is hidden beneath the most charming good-fellowship. Conti has not the courage of his vice; he smiles at Meyerbeer and pays him compliments, while he longs to rend him. He feels himself weak, and gives himself the airs of force; and his vanity is such that he affects the sentiments furthest from his heart. He assumes to be an artist inspired direct from Heaven. To him Art is something sacred and holy. He is a fanatic; he is sublime in his fooling of fashionable folk; his eloquence seems to flow from the deepest convictions. He is a seer, a demon, a god, an angel. In short, though I have warned you, Calyste, you will be his dupe. This southerner, this seething artist, is as cold as a well-rope.

"You listen to him; the artist is a missionary, Art is a religion that has its priesthood and must have its martyrs. Once started, Gennaro mounts to the most dishevelled pathos that ever a German philosopher spouted out on his audience. You admire his convictions—he believes in nothing. He carries you up to heaven by a song that seems to be some mysterious fluid, flowing with love; he gives you a glance of ecstasy; but he keeps an eye on your admiration; he is

asking himself, 'Am I really a god to these people?' And in the same instant he is perhaps saying to himself, 'I have eaten too much macaroni.' You fancy he loves you—he hates you; and you do not know why. But I always knew. He had seen some woman the day before, loved her for a whim, insulted me with false love, with hypocritical kisses, making me pay dearly for his feigned fidelity. In short, he is insatiable for applause; he shams everything, and trifles with everything; he can act joy as well as grief, and he succeeds to perfection. He can please, he is loved, he can get admiration whenever he chooses.

"I left him hating his voice; he owed it more success than he could get from his talent as a composer; and he would rather be a man of genius like Rossini than a performer as fine as Rubini. I had been so foolish as to attach myself to him, and I would have decked the idol till the last. Conti, like many artists, is very dainty, and likes his ease and his little enjoyments; he is dandified, elegant, well dressed; well, I humored all his manias, I loved that weak but astute character. I was envied, and I sometimes smiled with disdain. I respected his courage; he is brave, and bravery, it is said, is the only virtue which no hypocrisy can simulate. On one occasion, when travelling, I saw him put to the test; he was ready to risk his life—and he loves it; but, strange to say, in Paris I have known him guilty of what I call mental cowardice.

"My dear boy, I knew all this. I said to the poor Marquise, 'You do not know what a gulf you are setting foot in; you are the Perseus of a hapless Andromeda; you are rescuing me from the rock. If he loves you, so much the better; but I doubt it, he loves no one but himself.'

"Gennaro was in the seventh heaven of pride. I was no marquise; I was not born a Casteran; I was forgotten in a day. I allowed myself the fierce pleasure of studying this character to its depths. Certain of what the end would be, I meant to watch Conti's contortions. My poor boy, in one

week I saw horrors of sentimentality, hideous manœuvring! I will tell you no more; you will see the man here. Only, as he knows that I know him, he hates me now. If he could safely stab me, I should not be alive for two seconds.

"I have never said a word of this to Béatrix. Gennaro's last and constant insult is that he believes me capable of communicating my painful knowledge to the Marquise. He has become restless and absent-minded, for he cannot believe in good feeling in any one. He still performs for my benefit the part of a man grieved to have deserted me. You will find him full of the most penetrating cordiality; he will wheedle, he will be chivalrous. To him every woman is a Madonna! You have to live with him for some time before you detect the secret of that false frankness, or know the stiletto prick of his humbug. His air of conviction would take in God. And so you will be enmeshed by his feline blandishments, and will never conceive of the deep and rapid arithmetic of his inmost mind.—Let him be.

"I carried indifference to the point of receiving them together at my house. The consequence of this was that the most suspicious world on earth, the world of Paris, knew nothing of the intrigue. Though Gennaro was drunk with pride, he wanted, no doubt, to pose before Béatrix; his dissimulation was consummate. He surprised me; I had expected to find that he insisted on a stage-effect. It was she who compromised herself, after a year of happiness under all the vicissitudes and risks of Parisian existence.

"She had not seen Gennaro for some days, and I had invited him to dine with me, as she was coming in the evening. Rochefide had no suspicions; but Béatrix knew her husband so well, that, as she often told me, she would have preferred the worst poverty to the wretched life that awaited her in the event of that man ever having a right to scorn or to torment her. I had chosen the evening when our friend the Comtesse de Montcornet was at home. After seeing her husband served with his coffee, Béatrix left the drawing-

room to dress, though she was not in the habit of getting ready so early.

"'Your hairdresser is not here yet,' said Rochefide, when he heard why she was going.

"'Thérèse can do my hair,' she replied.

"'Why, where are you going? You cannot go to Madame de Montcornet's at eight o'clock.'

"'No,' said she, 'but I shall hear the first act of the Italian Opera.'

"The catechising bailiff in Voltaire's 'Huron' is a silent man by comparison with an idle husband. Béatrix fled, to be no further questioned, and did not hear her husband say, 'Very well; we will go together.'

"He did not do it on purpose; he had no reason to suspect his wife; she was allowed so much liberty! He tried never to fetter her in any way; he prided himself on it. And, indeed, her conduct did not offer the smallest hold for the strictest critic. The Marquis was going who knows where—to see his mistress perhaps. He had dressed before dinner; he had only to take up his hat and gloves when he heard his wife's carriage draw up under the awning of the steps in the courtyard. He went to her room and found her ready, but amazed at seeing him.

"'Where are you going?' said she.

"'Did I not tell you I would go with you to the Opera?'

"The Marquise controlled the outward expression of intense annoyance; but her cheeks turned as scarlet as though she had used rouge.

"'Well, come then,' she replied.

"Rochefide followed her, without heeding the agitation betrayed by her voice; she was burning with the most violent suppressed rage.

"'To the Opera,' said her husband.

"'No,' cried Béatrix, 'to Mademoiselle des Touches'. I have a word to say to her,' she added when the door was shut.

"The carriage started.

"'But if you like,' Béatrix added, 'I can take you first to the Opera and go to her afterward.'

"'No,' said the Marquis; 'if you have only a few words to say to her, I will wait in the carriage; it is only half-past seven.'

"If Béatrix had said to her husband, 'Go to the Opera and leave me alone,' he would have obeyed her quite calmly. Like every clever woman, knowing herself guilty, she was afraid of rousing his suspicions, and resigned herself. Thus, when she gave up the Opera to come to my house, her husband accompanied her. She came in scarlet with rage and impatience. She walked straight up to me, and said in a low voice, with the calmest manner in the world:

"'My dear Félicité, I shall start for Italy to-morrow evening with Conti; beg him to make his arrangements, and wait for me here with a carriage and passport.'

"Then she left with her husband.—Violent passions insist on liberty at any cost. Béatrix had for a year been suffering from want of freedom and the rarity of their meetings, for she considered herself one with Gennaro. So nothing could surprise me. In her place, with my temper, I should have acted as she did. Conti's happiness broke my heart; only his vanity was engaged in this matter.

"'That is indeed being loved!' he exclaimed, in the midst of his transports. 'How few women would thus forego their whole life, their fortune, their reputation!'

"'Oh, yes, she loves you,' said I; 'but you do not love her!'

"He flew into a fury and made a scene; he harangued, he scolded, he described his passion, saying he had never thought it possible that he could love so much. I was immovably cool, and loaned him the money he might want for the journey that had taken him by surprise.

"Béatrix wrote a letter to her husband, and set out for Italy the next evening. She stayed there two years; she wrote to me several times. Her letters are bewitchingly

friendly; the poor child clings to me as the only woman that understands her. She tells me she adores me. Want of money compelled Gennaro to write an opera; he did not find in Italy the pecuniary resources open to a composer in Paris.—Here is her last letter; you can understand it now if, at your age, you can analyze the emotions of the heart," she added, handing him the letter.

At this moment Claude Vignon came in. At the unexpected sight Calyste and Félicité sat silent for a minute, she from surprise, he from vague dissatisfaction. Claude's vast, high, and wide forehead, bald at seven-and-thirty, was dark with clouds. His firm, judicious lips expressed cold irony. Claude Vignon is an imposing person, in spite of the changes in a face that was splendid and is now grown livid. From the age of eighteen to five-and-twenty he had a strong likeness to the divine young Rafael; but his nose, the human feature which most readily alters, has grown sharp; his countenance has, as it were, sunk under mysterious hollows, the outlines have grown puffy, and with a bad color; leaden grays predominate in the worn complexion, though no one knows what the fatigues can be of a young man, aged perhaps by crushing loneliness, and an abuse of keen discernment. He is always examining other men's minds, without object or system; the pickaxe of his criticism is always destroying, and never constructing anything. His weariness is that of the laborer, not of the architect.

His eyes, light blue and once bright, are dimmed with unconfessed suffering, or clouded by sullen sadness. Dissipation has darkened the eyelids beneath the brows; the temples have lost their smoothness. The chin, most nobly molded, has grown double without dignity. His voice, never very sonorous, has grown thin; it is not hoarse, not husky, but something between the two. The inscrutability of this fine face, the fixity of that gaze, cover an irresolution and weakness that are betrayed in the shrewd and ironical smile. This weakness affects his actions, but not his mind;

the stamp of encyclopedic intellect is on that brow and in the habit of that face, at once childlike and lofty.

One detail may help to explain the eccentricities of this character. The man is tall and already somewhat bent, like all who bear a world of ideas. These tall, long frames have never been remarkable for tenacious energy, for creative activity. Charlemagne, Narses, Belisarius, and Constantine have been, in this particular, very noteworthy exceptions. Claude Vignon, no doubt, suggests mysteries to be solved. In the first place, he is at once very simple and very deep. Though he rushes into excess with the readiness of a courtesan, his mind remains unclouded. The intellect which can criticise art, science, literature, and politics is inadequate to control his outer life. Claude contemplates himself in the wide extent of his intellectual realm, and gives up the form of things with Diogenes-like indifference. Content with seeing into everything, understanding everything, he scorns material details; but, being beset with hesitancy as soon as creation is needed, he sees obstacles without being carried away by beauties, and by dint of discussing means, he sits, his hands hanging idle, producing no results. Intellectually he is a Turk in whom meditation induces sleep. Criticism is his opium, and his harem of books has disgusted him with any work he might do.

He is equally indifferent to the smallest and to the greatest things, and is compelled by the mere weight of his brain to throw himself into debauchery to abdicate for a little while the irresistible power of his omnipotent analysis. He is too much absorbed by the seamy side of genius, and you may now conceive that Camille Maupin should try to show him the right side.

The task was a fascinating one. Claude Vignon believed himself no less great as a politician than he was as a writer; but this Machiavelli of private life laughs in his sleeve at ambitious persons, he knows all he can ever know, he instinctively measures his future life by his faculties, he sees himself great, he looks obstacles in the face, perceives the

folly of parvenus, takes fright, or is disgusted, and lets the time slip by without doing anything. Like Etienne Lousteau, the feuilleton writer; like Nathan, the famous dramatic author; like Blondet, another journalist, he was born in the middle class to which we owe most of our great writers.

"Which way did you come?" said Mademoiselle des Touches, coloring with pleasure or surprise.

"In at the door," replied Claude Vignon dryly.

"Well," she replied, with a shrug, "I know you are not a man to come in at the window."

"Scaling a balcony is a sort of cross of honor for the beloved fair."

"Enough!" said Félicité.

"I am in the way?" said Claude Vignon.

"Monsieur," said the guileless Calyste, "this letter—"

"Keep it; I ask no questions. At our age such things need no words," said he, in a satirical tone, interrupting Calyste.

"But, indeed, Monsieur—" Calyste began indignantly.

"Be calm, young man; my indulgence for feelings is boundless."

"My dear Calyste," said Camille, anxious to speak.

"Dear?" said Vignon, interrupting her.

"Claude is jesting," Camille went on, addressing Calyste; "and he is wrong—with you who know nothing of Paris and its 'chaff.' "

"I had no idea that I was funny," said Vignon very gravely.

"By what road did you come? For two hours I have never ceased looking out toward le Croisic."

"You were not incessantly looking," replied Vignon.

"You are intolerable with your banter."

"Banter! I?"

Calyste rose.

"You are not so badly off here that you need leave," said Vignon.

"On the contrary," said the indignant youth, to whom Camille gave her hand, which he kissed instead of merely taking it, and left on it a scalding tear.

"I wish I were that little young man," said the critic, seating himself, and taking the end of the hookah. "How he will love!"

"Too much, for then he will not be loved," said Mademoiselle des Touches. "Madame de Rochefide is coming here."

"Good!" said Claude; "and with Conti?"

"She will stay here alone, but he is bringing her."

"Have they quarrelled?"

"No."

"Play me a sonata by Beethoven; I know nothing of the music he has written for the piano."

Claude filled the bowl of the hookah with tobacco, watching Camille more closely than she knew; a hideous idea possessed him; he fancied that a straightforward woman believed she had duped him. The situation was a new one.

Calyste as he went away was thinking neither of Béatrix de Rochefide nor her letter; he was furious with Claude Vignon, full of wrath at what he thought want of delicacy, and of pity for poor Félicité. How could a man be loved by that perfect woman and not worship her on his knees, not trust her on the faith of a look or a smile? After being the privileged spectator of the suffering Félicité had endured while waiting, he felt an impulse to rend that pale cold spectre. He knew nothing himself, as Félicité had told him, of the sort of deceptive witticisms in which the satirists of the press excel. To him love was a human form of religion.

On seeing him cross the courtyard, his mother could not restrain a joyful exclamation, and old Mademoiselle du Guénic whistled for Mariotte.

"Mariotte, here is the child; give us the *lubine*."

"I saw him, Mademoiselle," replied the cook.

His mother, a little distressed by the melancholy that sat

on Calyste's brow, never suspecting that it was caused by what he thought Vignon's bad treatment of Félicité, took up her worsted work. The old aunt pulled out her knitting. The Baron gave up his easy-chair to his son, and walked up and down the room as if to unstiffen his legs before taking a turn in the garden. No Flemish or Dutch picture represents an interior of richer tone, or furnished with more happily suitable figures. The handsome youth, dressed in black velvet, the mother, still so handsome, and the two old folk, in the setting of ancient panelling, were the expression of the most touching domestic harmony.

Fanny longed to question Calyste, but he had taken Béatrix's letter out of his pocket—the letter which was, perhaps, to destroy all the happiness this noble family enjoyed. As he unfolded it, Calyste's lively imagination called up the Marquise dressed as Camille Maupin had fantastically described her.

*From Béatrix to Félicité*

"Genoa, *July 2d.*

"I have not written to you, my dear friend, since our stay at Florence, but Venice and Rome took up all my time; and happiness, as you know, fills a large place in life. We are neither of us likely to take strict account of a letter more or less. I am a little tired; I insisted on seeing everything, and to a mind not easily satiated the repetition of pleasures brings fatigue. Our friend had great triumphs at the Scala, at the Fenice, and these last three days at the San Carlo. Three Italian operas in two years! You cannot say that love has made him idle.

"We have been warmly welcomed everywhere, but I should have preferred silence and solitude. Is not that the only mode of life that suits a woman in direct antagonism with the world? This was what I had expected. Love, my dear, is a more exacting master than marriage; but it is sweet to serve him. After having played at love all my life, I did not know that I must see the world again, even in glimpses, and the attentions paid me on all hands were so many wounds.

I was no longer on an equal footing with women of the highest type. The more kindly I was treated, the more was my inferiority marked. Gennaro did not understand these subtleties, but he was so happy that I should have been graceless if I had not sacrificed such petty vanities to a thing so splendid as an artist's life.

"We live only by love, while men live by love and action —otherwise they would not be men. There are, however, immense disadvantages to a woman in the position in which I have placed myself; and you have avoided them. You have remained great in the face of the world which had no rights over you; you have perfect liberty, and I have lost mine. I am speaking only with reference to concerns of the heart, and not to social matters, which I have wholly sacrificed. You might be vain and wilful, you might have all the graces of a woman in love, who can give or refuse anything as she chooses; you had preserved the privilege of being capricious, even in the interest of your affection and of the man you might like. In short, you, even now, have still your own sanction; I have not the freedom of feeling which, as I think, it is always delightful to assert in love, even when the passion is an eternal one. I have not the right to quarrel in jest, which we women so highly and so rightly prize: is it not the line by which we sound the heart? I dare not threaten, I must rely for attractiveness on infinite docility and sweetness, I must be impressive through the immenseness of my love; I would rather die than give up Gennaro, for the holiness of my passion is its only plea for pardon.

"I did not hesitate between my social dignity and my own little dignity—a secret between me and my conscience. Though I have fits of melancholy, like the clouds which float across the clearest sky, to which we women like to give way, I silence them at once; they would look like regret. Dear me! I so fully understood the extent of my debt to him that I have equipped myself with unlimited indulgence; but hitherto Gennaro has not roused my sensitive jealousy. In-

deed, I cannot see how my dear great genius can do wrong. I am, my dear, rather like the devotees who argue with their God, for is it not to you that I owe my happiness? And you cannot doubt that I have often thought of you.

"At last I have seen Italy! As you saw it, as it ought to be seen, illuminated to the soul by love, as it is by its glorious sun and its masterpieces of art. I pity those who are incessantly fired by the admiration it calls for at every step when they have not a hand to clasp, a heart into which they may pour the overflow of emotions which then subside as they grow deeper. These two years are to me all my life, and my memory will have reaped a rich harvest. Did you not, as I did, dream of settling at Chiavari, of buying a palace at Venice, a villa at Sorrento, a house at Florence? Do not all women who love shun the world? And I, forever an outcast, could I help longing to bury myself in a lovely landscape, in a heap of flowers, looking out on the pretty sea, or a valley as good as the sea, like the valley you look on from Fiesole?

"But, alas, we are poor artists, and want of money is dragging the wanderers back to Paris again. Gennaro cannot bear me to feel that I have left all my luxury, and he is bringing a new work, a grand opera, to be rehearsed in Paris. Even at the cost of my love, I cannot bear to meet one of those looks from a woman or a man which would make me feel murderous. Yes! for I could hack any one to pieces who should condescend to pity me, should offer me the protection of patronage—like that enchanting Chateauneuf who, in the time of Henri III., I think, spurred her horse to trample down the Provost of Paris for some such offence.

"So I am writing to tell you that without delay I shall arrive to join you at les Touches, and wait for our Gennaro in that quiet spot. You see how bold I am with my benefactress and sister. Still, the magnitude of the obligation will not betray my heart, like some others, into ingratitude.

"You have told me so much about the difficulties of the journey that I shall try to reach le Croisic by sea. This

idea occurred to me on hearing that there was here a little Danish vessel, loaded here with marble, which will put in at le Croisic to take up salt on its way back to the Baltic. By this voyage I shall avoid the fatigue and expense of travelling by post. I know you are not alone, and I am glad of it; I had some remorse in the midst of my happiness. You are the only person with whom I could bear to be alone without Conti. Will it not be a pleasure to you too to have a woman with you who will understand your happiness and not be jealous of it?

"Well, till our meeting! The wind is fair, and I am off, sending you a kiss."

"Well, well, she too knows how to love!" said Calyste to himself, folding up the letter with a sad expression.

This sadness flashed on his mother's heart like a gleam lighting up an abyss. The Baron had just left the room. Fanny bolted the door to the turret, and returned to lean over the back of the chair in which her boy was sitting, as Dido's sister bends over her in Guérin's picture. She kissed his forehead and said: "What is the matter, my child? what makes you unhappy? You promised to account to me for your constant visits to les Touches; I ought to bless its mistress, you say?"

"Yes, indeed," he replied. "She, my dear mother, has shown me all the defects of my education in these times, when men of noble birth must acquire personal merit if they are to restore their names to life again. I was as remote from my day as Guérande is from Paris. She has been, in a way, the mother of my intelligence."

"Not for that can I bless her!" said the Baroness, her eyes filling with tears.

"Mother," cried Calyste, on whose forehead the hot tears fell, drops of heartbroken motherhood, "mother, do not cry. Just now, when, to do her a pleasure, I proposed scouring the coast from the custom-house hut to the Bourg de Batz, she said to me, 'How anxious your mother would be!' "

"She said so! Then I can forgive her much," said Fanny.

"Félicité wishes me well," replied Calyste, "and she often checks herself from saying some of those hasty and doubtful things which artists let fall, so as not to shake my faith—knowing that it is not immovable. She has told me of the life led in Paris by youths of the highest rank, going from their country homes as I might from mine, leaving their family without any fortune, and making great wealth by the force of their will and their intelligence. I can do what the Baron de Rastignac has done, and he is in the Ministry.—She gives me lessons on the piano, she teaches me Italian, she has let me into a thousand social secrets of which no one has an inkling at Guérande. She could not give me the treasures of her love; she gives me those of her vast intellect, her wit, her genius. She does not choose to be a mere pleasure, but a light to me; she offends none of my creeds; she believes in the nobility, she loves Brittany—"

"She has changed our Calyste," said the old blind woman, interrupting him, "for I understand nothing of this talk. You have a fine old house over your head, nephew, old relations who worship you, good old servants; you can marry a good little Bretonne, a pious and well-bred girl who will make you happy, and you can reserve your ambitions for your eldest son, who will be three times as rich as you are if you are wise enough to live quietly and economically, in the shade and in the peace of the Lord, so as to redeem the family estates. That is as simple as a Breton heart. You will get rich less quickly, but far more surely."

"Your aunt is right, my darling; she cares as much for your happiness as I do. If I should not succeed in arranging your marriage with Miss Margaret, your uncle Lord Fitz-William's daughter, it is almost certain that Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel will leave her money to either of her nieces you may prefer."

"And there will be a few crown pieces here!" said the old aunt in a low mysterious voice.

"I! Marry at my age?" said he, with one of those looks

which weaken a mother's reason. "Am I to have no sweet and crazy love-making? Am I never to tremble, thrill, flutter, fear, lie down under a pitiless gaze and presently melt it? May I never know the beauty that is free, the fancy of the soul, the clouds that fleet over the serene blue of happiness and that the breath of enjoyment blows away? May I never stand under a gutter spout without discovering that it is raining, like the lovers seen by Diderot? Shall I never hold a burning coal in the palm of my hand like the Duc de Lorraine? Shall I never climb a silken rope-ladder, nor cling to a rotten old trellis without feeling it yield? Am I never to hide in a closet or under a bed? Can I know nothing of woman but wifely surrender, or of love but its equable lamplight? Is all my curiosity to be satiated before it is excited? Am I to live without ever feeling that fury of the heart which adds to a man's power? Am I to be a married monk?—No! I have set my teeth in the Paris apple of civilization. Do you not perceive that by your chaste, your ignorant family habits you have laid the fire that is consuming me, and that I shall be burned up before I can adore the divinity I see wherever I turn—in the green foliage and in the sand glowing in the sunshine, and in all the beautiful, lordly, and elegant women who are described in the books and poems I have devoured at Camille's? Alas! There is but one such woman in all Guérande, and that is you, mother! The lovely Blue Birds of my dreams come from Paris; they live in the pages of Lord Byron and Scott; they are Parisina, Effie, Minna! Or, again, that Royal Duchess I saw in the moors among the heath and broom, whose beauty sent my blood with a rush to the heart!"

These thoughts were clearer, more brilliant, more living, to the Baroness's eye, than art can make them to the reader; she saw them in a flash shot from the boy's glance like the arrows from a quiver that is upset. Though she had never read Beaumarchais, she thought, as any woman would, that it would be a crime to make this Cherubino marry.

"Oh, my dear boy!" said she, taking him in her arms,

pressing him to her, and kissing his beautiful hair—still her own—"marry when you please, only be happy. It is not my part to tease you."

Mariotte came to lay the table. Gasselin had gone out to exercise Calyste's horse, for he had not ridden it these two months. The three women, the mother, the aunt, and Mariotte were of one mind, with the natural cunning of women, to make much of Calyste when he dined at home. Breton penuriousness, fortified by the memories and habits of childhood, tried to contend with the civilization of Paris so faithfully represented at les Touches, so close to Guérande. Mariotte tried to disgust her young master with the elaborate dishes prepared in Camille Maupin's kitchen, as his mother and aunt vied with each other in attentions to enmesh their child in the nets of their tenderness, and to make comparisons impossible.

"Ah, ha! You have a *lubine* (a sort of fish), Monsieur Calyste, and snipe, and pancakes such as you will never get anywhere but here," said Mariotte, with a knowing and triumphant air, as she looked down on the white cloth, a perfect sheet of snow.

After dinner, when his old aunt had settled down to her knitting again, when the curé of Guérande and the Chevalier du Halga came in, attracted by their game of *mouche*, Calyste went out to go back to les Touches, saying he must return Béatrix's letter.

Claude Vignon and Mademoiselle des Touches were still at table. The great critic had a tendency to greediness, and this vice was humored by Félicité, who knew how a woman makes herself indispensable by such attentions.

The dining-room, lately finished by considerable additions, showed how readily and how quickly a woman can marry the nature, adopt the profession, the passions, and the tastes of the man she loves, or means to love. The table had the rich and dazzling appearance which modern luxury, seconded by the improvements in manufactures,

stamps on every detail. The noble but impoverished house of du Guénic knew not the antagonist with whom it had to do battle, nor how large a sum was needed to contend with the brand-new plate brought from Paris by Mademoiselle des Touches, with her china—thought good enough for the country—her fine linen, her silver gilt, all the trifles on her table, and all the skill of her man cook.

Calyste declined to take any of the liqueurs contained in one of the beautiful inlaid cases of precious woods, that might be shrines.

"Here is your letter," he said, with childish ostentation, looking at Claude, who was sipping a glass of West Indian liqueur.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Mademoiselle des Touches, tossing the letter across the table to Vignon, who read it, alternately lifting and setting down his glass.

"Why—that the women of Paris are very happy; they all have men of genius, who love them, to worship."

"Dear me, you are still but a rustic!" said Félicité, with a laugh. "What! You did not discover that she already loves him less, that—"

"It is self-evident!" said Claude Vignon, who had as yet read no more than the first page. "When a woman is really in love, does she trouble her head in the least about her position? Is she as finely observant as the Marquise? Can she calculate? Can she distinguish? Our dear Béatrix is tied to Conti by her pride; she is condemned to love him, come what may."

"Poor woman!" said Camille.

Calyste sat staring at the table, but he saw nothing. The beautiful creature in her fantastic costume, as sketched by Félicité that morning, rose before him, radiant with light; she smiled on him, she played with her fan, and her other hand, emerging from a frill of lace and cherry-colored velvet, lay white and still on the full folds of her magnificent petticoat.

"This is the very thing for you," said Claude Vignon, with a sardonic smile at Calyste.

Calyste was offended at the words *the very thing*.

"Do not suggest the idea of such an intrigue to the dear child; you do not know how dangerous such a jest may be. I know Béatrix; she has too much magnanimity of temper to change; besides, Conti will be with her."

"Ah!" said Claude Vignon satirically, "a little twinge of jealousy, heh?"

"Can you suppose it?" said Camille proudly.

"You are more clearsighted than a mother could be," replied Claude.

"But, I ask you, is it possible?" and she looked at Calyste.

"And yet," Vignon went on, "they would be well matched. She is ten years older than he is; he would be the girl."

"A girl, monsieur, who has twice been under fire in la Vendée. If there had but been twenty thousand of such girls—"

"I was singing your praise," said Vignon, "an easier matter than singeing your beard."

"I have a sword to cut the beards of those who wear them too long," retorted Calyste.

"And I have a tongue that cuts sharply too," replied Vignon, smiling. "We are Frenchmen—the affair can be arranged."

Mademoiselle des Touches gave Calyste a beseeching look, which calmed him at once.

"Why," said Félicité, to end the discussion, "why is it that youths, like my Calyste there, always begin by loving women no longer young?"

"I know of no more guileless and generous impulse," said Vignon. "It is the consequence of the delightful qualities of youth. And besides, to what end would old women come if it were not for such love? You are young and handsome, and will be for twenty years to come; before you we may speak plainly," he went on, with a keen glance

at Mademoiselle des Touches. "In the first place, the semi-dowagers to whom very young men attach themselves know how to love far better than young women. A youth is too like a woman for a young woman to attract him. Such a passion is too suggestive of the myth of Narcissus. Besides this, there is, I believe, a common want of experience which keeps them asunder. Hence the reason which makes it true that a young woman's heart can only be understood by a man in whom long practice is veiled by his real or assumed passion, is the same as that which, allowing for differences of nature, makes a woman past her youth more seductive to a boy; he is intensely conscious that he shall succeed with her, and the woman's vanity is intensely flattered by his pursuit of her.

"Then, again, it is natural that the young should seize on fruit, and autumn offers many fine and luscious kinds. Is it nothing to meet those looks, at once bold and reserved, languishing at the proper moments, soft with the last gleams of love, so warm, so soothing? And the elaborate elegance of speech, the splendid ripe shoulders so finely filled out, the ample roundness, the rich and undulating plumpness, the hands full of dimples, the pulpy well-nourished skin, the brow full of overflowing sentiment, on which the light lingers, the hair, so carefully cherished and dressed, where fine partings of white skin are delicately traced, and the throat with those fine curves, the inviting nape where every resource of art is applied to bring out the contrast between the hair and the tones of the flesh, to emphasize all the audacity of life and love? Dark women then get some of the tones of the fairest, the amber shade of maturity.

"Then, again, these women betray their knowledge of the world in their smiles, and display it in their conversation; they know how to talk; they will set the whole world before you to raise a smile; they have sublime touches of dignity and pride; they can shriek with despair in a way to break your heart, wail a farewell to love, knowing that

it is futile, and only resuscitates passion; they grow young again by dint of varying the most desperately simple things. They constantly expect to be contradicted as to the falling off they so coquettishly proclaim, and the intoxication of their triumph is contagious. Their devotion is complete; they listen, in short, they love; they clutch at love as a man condemned to death clings to the smallest trifles of living; they are like those lawyers who can urge every plea in a case without fatiguing the Court; they exhaust every means in their power; indeed, perfect love can only be known in them.

"I doubt if they ever are forgotten, any more than we can forget anything vast and sublime.

"A young woman has a thousand other things to amuse her, these women have nothing; they have no conceit left, no vanity, no meanness; their love is the Loire at its mouth, immense, swelled by every disenchantment, every affluent of life, and that is why—my daughter is dumb!" he ended, seeing Mademoiselle des Touches in an attitude of ecstasy, clutching Calyste's hand tightly, perhaps to thank him for having been the cause of such a moment for her, of such a tribute of praise that she could detect no snare in it.

All through the evening Claude Vignon and Félicité were brilliantly witty, telling anecdotes and describing the life of Paris to Calyste, who quite fell in love with Claude, for wit exerts a peculiar charm on men of feeling.

"I should not be in the least surprised to see Madame de Rochefide land here to-morrow with Conti, who is accompanying her no doubt," said Claude at the end of the evening. "When I came up from le Croisic the seamen had spied a small ship, Danish, Swedish, or Norwegian."

This speech brought the color to Camille's cheeks, calm as she was.

That night, again, Madame du Guénic sat up for her son till one o'clock, unable to imagine what he could be doing at les Touches if Félicité did not love him.

"He must be in the way," thought this delightful mother.

"What have you had to talk about so long?" she asked, as she saw him come in.

"Oh, mother! I never spent a more delightful evening. Genius is a great, a most sublime thing! Why did you not bestow genius on me? With genius a man must be able to choose the woman he loves from all the world; she must inevitably be his!"

"But you are handsome, my Calyste."

"Beauty has no place but in women. And besides, Claude Vignon is fine. Men of genius have a brow that beams, eyes where lightnings play—and I, unhappy wretch, I only know how to love."

"They say that is all-sufficient, my darling," said she, kissing his forehead.

"Really, truly?"

"I have been told so. I have had no experience."

It was Calyste's turn to kiss his mother's hand with reverence.

"I will love for all those who might have been your adorers," said he.

"Dear child, it is in some degree your duty; you have inherited all my feelings. So do not be rash; try to love only high-souled women, if you must love."

What young man, welling over with passion and suppressed vitality, but would have had the triumphant idea of going to le Croisic to see Madame de Rochefide land, so as to be able to study her, himself unknown? Calyste greatly amazed his father and mother, who knew nothing of the fair Marquise's arrival, by setting out in the morning without waiting for breakfast. Heaven knows how briskly the boy stepped out. He felt as if some new strength had come to his aid, he was so light; he kept close under the walls of les Touches to avoid being seen. The delightful boy was ashamed of his ardor, and had perhaps a miserable fear of being laughed at; Félicité and Claude Vignon were

so horribly keen-sighted! And, then, in such cases a youth believes that his forehead is transparent.

He followed the zigzag path across the maze of salt-marshes, reached the sands, and was across them with a skip and a hop, in spite of the scorching sun that twinkled on them.

This brought him to the edge of the strand, banked up with a breakwater, near which stands a house where travellers may find shelter from storms, sea gales, rain, and the whirlwind. It is not always possible to cross the little strait, nor are there always boats, and it is convenient, while they are crossing from the port, to have shelter for the horses, asses, merchandise, or passengers' luggage. From thence men can scan the open sea and the port of le Croisic; and from thence Calyste soon discerned two boats coming, loaded with baggage—bundles, trunks, carpet-bags, and cases, of which the shape and size proclaimed to the natives the arrival of extraordinary things, such as could only belong to a voyager of distinction.

In one of these boats sat a young woman with a straw hat and green veil, accompanied by a man. This boat was the first to come to land. Calyste felt a thrill; but their appearance showed them to be a maid and a manservant, and he dared not question them.

"Are you crossing to le Croisic, Monsieur Calyste?" asked one of the boatmen, who knew him; but he replied only by a negative shake of the head, ashamed of having his name mentioned.

Calyste was enchanted at the sight of a trunk covered with waterproof canvas, on which he read *Madame la Marquise de Rochefide.* The name glittered in his eyes like some talisman; it had to him a purport of mysterious doom; he knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that he should fall in love with this woman; the smallest things relating to her interested him already, spurred his fancy and his curiosity. Why?—In the burning desert of its immeasurable and objectless desires does not youth put forth all its powers

toward the first woman who comes within reach? Béatrix had fallen heir to the love that Camille had disdained.

Calyste watched the landing of the luggage, looking out from time to time at le Croisic, hoping to see a boat come out of the harbor, cross to this little headland, and reveal to him the Béatrix who had already become to him what another Beatrix was to Dante, an eternal statue of marble on whose hands he would hang his flowers and wreaths. He stood with his arms folded, lost in the dream of expectancy. A thing worthy of remark, but which nevertheless has never been remarked, is the way in which we frequently subordinate our feelings to our will, how we pledge ourself to ourself as it were, and how we make our fate; chance has certainly far less share in it than we suppose.

"I see no horses," said the maid, sitting on a trunk.

"And I see no carriage-road," said the valet.

"Well, horses have certainly been here," replied the woman, pointing to their traces. "Monsieur," said she, addressing Calyste, "is that the road leading to Guérande?"

"Yes," said he; "whom are you expecting?"

"We were told that we should be met, fetched to les Touches.—If they are very late, I do not know how Madame can dress," said she to the man. "You had better walk on to les Touches. What a land of savages!"

It dawned on Calyste that he was in a false position.

"Then your mistress is going to les Touches?" he asked.

"Mademoiselle came to meet her at seven this morning," was the reply. "Ah! here come the horses."

Calyste fled, running back to Guérande with the swiftness and lightness of a chamois, and doubling like a hare to avoid being seen by the servants from les Touches; still, he met two of them in the narrow way across the marsh which he had to cross.

"Shall I go in? Shall I not?" he asked himself as he saw the tops of the pine-trees of les Touches.

He was afraid; he returned to Guérande hang-dog and

repentant, and walked up and down the Mall, where he continued the discussion with himself.

He started as he caught sight of les Touches, and studied the weather-cocks.

"She can have no idea of my excitement," said he to himself.

His wandering thoughts became so many grapnels that caught in his heart and held the Marquise there. Calyste had felt none of these terrors, these anticipatory joys with regard to Camille; he had first met her on horseback, and his desire had sprung up, as at the sight of a beautiful flower he might have longed to pluck. These vacillations constitute a sort of poem in a timid soul. Fired by the first flames of imagination, these souls rise up in wrath, are appeased and eager by turns, and in silence and solitude reach the utmost heights of love before they have even spoken to the object of so many struggles.

Calyste saw from afar, on the Mall, the Chevalier du Halga, walking with Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel; he hid himself. The Chevalier and the old lady, believing themselves alone on the Mall, were talking aloud.

"Since Charlotte de Kergarouet is coming to you," said the Chevalier, "keep her three or four months. How can you expect her to flirt with Calyste? She never stays here long enough to attempt it; whereas, if they see each other every day, the two children will end by being desperately in love, and you will see them married this winter. If you say two words of your plans to Charlotte, she will at once say four to Calyste; and a girl of sixteen will certainly win the day against a woman of forty-something!"

The two old folk turned to retrace their steps. Calyste heard no more, but he had understood what Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel's plan was. In his present frame of mind nothing could be more disastrous. Is it in the fever of a preconceived passion that a young man will accept as his wife a girl found for him by others? Calyste, who cared not a straw for Charlotte de Kergarouet, felt inclined to repulse

her. Considerations of money could not touch him; he had been accustomed from childhood to the modest style of his father's house; besides, seeing Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel live as poorly as the Guénics themselves, he had no notion of her wealth. And a youth brought up as Calyste had been would not, in any case, consider anything but feeling; and all his mind was set on the Marquise.

Compared with the portrait drawn by Camille, what was Charlotte? The companion of his childhood, whom he treated as his sister.

He did not get home till five o'clock. When he went into the room, his mother, with a melancholy smile, handed him a note from Mademoiselle des Touches as follows:

"My dear Calyste—The beautiful Marquise de Rochefide has arrived; we count on you to do honor to her advent. Claude, always satirical, declares that you will be Bice and she Dante. The honor of Brittany and of the Guénics is at stake when there is a Casteran to be welcomed. So let us meet soon.—Yours, Camille Maupin.

"Come as you are, without ceremony, or we shall look ridiculous."

Calyste showed his mother the note and went at once.

"What are these Casterans?" said she to the Baron.

"An old Norman family, related to William the Conqueror," he replied. "Their arms are In tierce per fess azure gules and or, a horse rearing argent hoofed or.—The beautiful creature for whom le Gars was killed at Fougères in 1800 was the daughter of a Casteran who became a nun at Séez, and was made abbess after being thrown over by the Duc de Verneuil."

"And the Rochefides?"

"I do not know the name; I should want to see their arms," said he

The Baroness was a little relieved at hearing that the Marquise Béatrix de Rochefide was of an old family; still,

she felt some alarm at knowing that her son was exposed to fresh fascinations.

Calyste, as he walked, felt the most violent and yet delightful impulses; his throat was choked, his heart full, his brain confused; he was devoured by fever. He wanted to walk slower, but a superior power urged him on. All young men have known this perturbation of the senses caused by a vague hope: a subtle fire flames within and raises a halo, like the glory shown about the divine persons in a sacred picture, through which they see nature in a glow and woman radiant. Are they not then, like the saints themselves, full of faith, ardor, hope, and purity?

The young Breton found the whole party in Camille's little private drawing-room. It was by this time nearly six o'clock; through the windows the sinking sun shed a ruddy light, broken by the trees; the air was still, the room was full of the soft gloom that women love so well.

"Here is the member for Brittany," said Camille Maupin, smiling to her friend, as Calyste lifted the tapestry curtain over the door. "As punctual as a king!"

"You recognized his step?" said Claude Vignon to Mademoiselle des Touches.

Calyste bowed to the Marquise, who merely nodded to him; he had not looked at her. He shook hands with Claude Vignon, who offered him his hand.

"Here is the great man of whom you have heard so much, Gennaro Conti," Camille went on, without answering Claude Vignon.

She introduced to Calyste a man of middle height, thin and slender, with chestnut hair, eyes that were almost orange color, with a white, freckled skin, in short, so exactly the well-known head of Lord Byron that it would be superfluous to describe it—but perhaps he held it better. Conti was not a little proud of this resemblance.

"I am delighted, being but one day at les Touches, to meet Monsieur," said Gennaro.

"It is my part to say as much to you," replied Calyste, with sufficient ease of manner.

"He is as handsome as an angel!" the Marquise said to Félicité. Calyste, standing between the divan and the two women, overheard the words though spoken in a whisper. He moved to an armchair, and stole watchful looks at the Marquise. In the soft light of the setting sun he saw lounging on the divan, as though a sculptor had placed her in position, a white sinuous figure which seemed to dazzle his sight. Félicité, without knowing it, had served her friend well by her description.

Béatrix was superior to the not too flattering portrait drawn by Camille. Was it not partly for the stranger's benefit that Béatrix had placed in her splendid hair bunches of blue cornflowers, which showed off the pale gleam of her ringlets, arranged to frame her face and flicker over her cheeks? Her eyes were set in circles darkened by fatigue, but only to the tone of the purest and most opalescent mother-of-pearl; her cheeks were as bright as her eyes. Under her white skin, as delicate as the silky lining of an egg-shell, life flushed in the purple blood. The finish of her features was exquisite; her brow seemed diaphanous. This fair and gentle head, finely set on a long neck of marvellous beauty, lent itself to the most varying expression.

Her waist, slight enough to span, had a bewitching grace; her bare shoulders gleamed in the twilight like a white camellia in black hair. The bosom, well supported, but covered with a clear handkerchief, showed two exquisitely enticing curves. The muslin dress—white flowered with blue, the wide sleeves, the bodice, pointed, and without any sash, the shoes with sandals crossed over fine thread stockings—all showed perfect knowledge of the arts of dress. Earrings of silver filigree, marvels of Genoese work which no doubt were coming into fashion, were admirably suited to the exquisite softness of the fair hair starred with cornflowers.

At a single eager glance Calyste took in all this beauty,

which stamped itself on his soul. Béatrix, so fair, and Félicité, so dark, recalled the "Keepsake" contrasts, so much affected by English engravers and draughtsmen. They were woman's weakness and woman's strength in their utmost expression, a perfect antithesis. These two women could never be rivals; each had her empire. They were like a delicate pale periwinkle or lily by the side of a sumptuous and gorgeous red poppy, or a turquoise by a ruby. In an instant Calyste was possessed by a passion which crowned the secret working of his hopes, his fears, his doubts. Mademoiselle des Touches had roused his senses, Béatrix fired his mind and heart. The young Breton was conscious of the birth within himself of an all-conquering force that would respect nothing. And he shot at Conti a look of envy and hatred, gloomy, and full of alarms, a look he had never had for Claude Vignon.

Calyste called up all his resolution to restrain himself, thinking, nevertheless, that the Turks were very right to keep their women shut up, and that such beautiful creatures should be forbidden to show themselves in their tempting witcheries to young men aflame with love. This hot hurricane was lulled as soon as Béatrix turned her eyes on him and her gentle voice made itself heard; the poor boy already feared her as he feared God.

The dinner-bell rang.

"Calyste, give your arm to the Marquise," said Mademoiselle des Touches, taking Conti on her right and Claude on her left, as she stood aside to let the young couple pass.

Thus to go down the old staircase of les Touches was to Calyste like a first battle; his heart failed him, he found nothing to say, a faint moisture stood on his brow and down his spine. His arm trembled so violently that at the bottom step the Marquise said to him: "What is the matter?"

"Never," said he in a choked voice, "never in my life have I seen a woman so beautiful as you are, excepting my mother; and I cannot control my agitation."

"Why, have you not Camille Maupin here?"

"But what a difference!" said Calyste artlessly.

"Ha! Calyste," Félicité whispered in his ear; "did I not tell you that you would forget me as though I had never existed? Sit there, next her on the right, and Vignon on her left.—As for you, Gennaro, I keep you by me," she added, laughing; "we will keep an eye on her flirtations."

The accent in which Camille spoke struck Claude, who looked at her with the wily and apparently absent glance, which in him showed that he was observant. He never ceased watching Mademoiselle des Touches throughout dinner.

"Flirtations!" replied the Marquise, drawing off her gloves and showing her beautiful hands; "I have every excuse; on one side of me I have a poet," and she turned to Claude, "on the other poetry."

Gennaro bestowed on Calyste a gaze full of flattery.

By candle-light Béatrix looked even more beautiful than before. The pale gleam of the wax-lights cast a satin sheen on her forehead, set sparks in her gazelle-like eyes, and fell through her silky ringlets, making separate hairs shine like threads of gold. With a graceful movement she threw off her gauze scarf, uncovering her shoulders. Calyste could then see the delicate nape, as white as milk, with a deep hollow that parted into two, curving off toward each shoulder with a lovely and delusive symmetry. The changes of aspect in which pretty women indulge produce very little effect in the fashionable world, where every eye is blasé, but they commit fearful ravages in a soul as fresh as was Calyste's. This bust, so unlike Camille's, revealed a perfectly different character in Béatrix. There could be seen pride of race, a tenacity peculiar to the aristocracy, and a certain hardness in that double muscle of the shoulder, which is perhaps the last surviving vestige of the conquerors' strength.

Calyste found it very difficult to seem to eat; he was full of nervous feelings, which took away his hunger. As in all young men, Nature was in the clutches of those throes which precede first love, and stamp it so deeply on the soul. At

his age the ardor of the heart repressed by the ardor of the moral sense leads to an internal conflict, which accounts for the long, respectful hesitancy, the deep absorption of love, the absence of all self-interest—all the peculiar attractions of youths whose heart and life are pure.

As he noted—by stealth, so as not to rouse Gennaro's jealous suspicions—all the details which make the Marquise de Rochefide so supremely beautiful, Calyste was oppressed by the majesty of the lady beloved; he felt himself shrink before the haughtiness of some of her glances, the imposing aspect of her face, overflowing with aristocratic self-consciousness, a pride which women can express by slight movements, by airs of the head and a magnificent slowness of gesture, which are all less affected and less studied than might be supposed. There is a sentiment behind all these modes of expression. The ambiguous position in which Béatrix found herself compelled her to keep a watch over herself, to be imposing without being ridiculous; and women of the highest stamp can all achieve this, though it is the rock on which ordinary women are wrecked.

Béatrix could guess from Félicité's looks all the secret adoration she inspired in her neighbor, and that it was unworthy of her to encourage it; so from time to time she bestowed on him a repellent glance that fell on him like an avalanche of snow. The unfortunate youth appealed to Mademoiselle des Touches by a gaze in which she felt the tears kept down in his heart by superhuman determination, and Félicité kindly asked him why he ate nothing. Calyste stuffed to order, and made a feint of joining in the conversation. The idea of being tiresome instead of agreeable was unendurable, and hammered at his brain. He was all the more bashful because he saw, behind the Marquise's chair, the manservant he had met in the morning on the jetty, who would no doubt report his curiosity.

Whether he were contrite or happy, Madame de Rochefide paid no attention to him. Mademoiselle des Touches had led her to talk of her journey in Italy, and she gave a

very witty account of the pointblank fire of passion with which a little Russian diplomat at Florence had honored her, laughing at these little young men who fling themselves at a woman as a locust rushes on grass. She made Claude Vignon and Gennaro laugh, and Félicité also; but these darts of sarcasm went straight to Calyste's heart, who only heard words through the humming in his ears and brain. The poor boy made no vow, as some obstinate men have done, to win this woman at any cost; no, he was not angry, he was miserable. When he discerned in Béatrix an intention to sacrifice him at Gennaro's feet, he only said to himself: "If only I can serve her in any way!" and allowed himself to be trampled on with the meekness of a lamb.

"How is it," said Claude Vignon to the Marquise, "that you, who so much admire poetry, give it so bad a reception? Such artless admiration, so sweet in its expression, with no second thought, no reservation, is not that the poetry of the heart? Confess now that it gives you a sense of satisfaction and well-being."

"Certainly," she replied, "but we should be very unhappy and, above all, very worthless if we yielded to every passion we inspire."

"If you made no selection," said Conti, "we should not be so proud of being loved."

"When shall I be chosen and distinguished by a woman?" Calyste wondered to himself, restraining his agony of emotion with difficulty.

He reddened like a sufferer on whose wound a finger is laid. Mademoiselle des Touches was startled by the expression she saw in Calyste's face, and tried to comfort him with a sympathizing look. Claude Vignon caught that look. From that moment the writer's spirits rose, and he vented his gayety in sarcasms: he maintained that love lived only in desire, that most women were mistaken in their love, that they often loved for reasons unknown to the men and to themselves, that they sometimes wished to deceive themselves, that the noblest of them were still insincere.

"Be content to criticise books, and do not criticise our feelings," said Camille, with an imperious flash.

The dinner ceased to be lively. Claude Vignon's satire had made both the women grave. Calyste was in acute torment in spite of the happiness of gazing at Béatrix. Conti tried to read Madame de Rochefide's eyes and guess her thoughts. When the meal was ended, Mademoiselle des Touches took Calyste's arm, left the other two men to the Marquise, and allowed them to lead the way, so as to say to the youth: "My dear boy, if the Marquise falls in love with you, she will pitch Conti out of the window; but you are behaving in such a way as to tighten their bonds. Even if she were enchanted by your worship, could she take any notice of it? Command yourself."

"She is so hard on me, she will never love me," said Calyste; "and if she does not love me, I shall die."

"Die! you! My dear Calyste, you are childish," said Camille. "You would not have died for me, then?"

"You made yourself my friend," replied he.

After the little chat that always accompanies the coffee, Vignon begged Conti to sing. Mademoiselle des Touches sat down to the piano. Camille and Gennaro sang "Dunque il mio bene tu mia sarai," the final duet in Zingarelli's "Romeo e Giulietta," one of the most pathetic pages of modern music. The passage "Di tanti palpiti" expresses love in all its passion. Calyste, sitting in the armchair where he had sat when Félicité had told him the story of the Marquise, listened devoutly. Béatrix and Vignon stood on each side of the piano.

Conti's exquisite voice blended perfectly with Félicité's. They both had frequently sung the piece; they knew all its resources, and agreed wonderfully in bringing them out. It was in their hands what the musician had intended to create, a poem of divine melancholy, the swan's song of two lovers. When the duet was ended the hearers were all in a state of feeling that cannot find expression in vulgar applause.

"Oh, Music is the queen of the arts!" exclaimed the Marquise.

"Camille gives the first place to youth and beauty—the queen of all poetry," said Claude Vignon.

Mademoiselle des Touches looked at Claude, dissembling a vague uneasiness. Béatrix, not seeing Calyste, looked round to see what effect the music had had on him, less out of interest in him than for Conti's satisfaction. In a recess she saw a pale face covered with tears. At the sight she hastily turned away, as if some acute pain had stung her, and looked at Gennaro.

It was not merely that Music had risen up before Calyste, had touched him with her divine hand, had launched him on creation and stripped it of its mysteries to his eyes—he was overwhelmed by Conti's genius. In spite of what Camille Maupin had told him of the man's character, he believed at this moment that the singer must have a beautiful soul, a heart full of love. How was he to contend against such an artist? How could a woman ever cease to adore him? The song must pierce her soul like another soul.

The poor boy was as much overcome by poetic feeling as by despair: he saw himself as so small a thing! This ingenuous conviction of his own nothingness was to be read in his face, mingling with his admiration. He did not observe Béatrix, who, attracted to Calyste by the contagion of genuine feeling, pointed him out by a glance to Mademoiselle des Touches.

"Oh! such a delightful nature!" said Félicité. "Conti, you will never receive any applause to compare with the homage paid you by this boy. Let us sing a trio.—Come, Béatrix, my dear."

When the Marquise, Camille, and Conti had returned to the piano, Calyste rose unperceived, flung himself on a sofa in the adjoining bedroom, of which the door was open, and remained there sunk in despair.

# PART II

## THE DRAMA

"WHAT IS THE MATTER with you, my boy?" said Claude Vignon, stealing quietly in after him and taking his hand. "You are in love, you believe yourself scorned; but it is not so. In a few days the field will be open to you, you will be supreme here, and be loved by more than one woman; in fact, if you know how to manage matters, you will be a Sultan here."

"What are you saying?" cried Calyste, starting to his feet and dragging Claude away into the library. "Who that is here loves me?"

"Camille," said Vignon.

"Camille loves me?" said Calyste. "And what of you?"

"I," said Claude, "I—"

He paused. Then he sat down and rested his head against a pillow, in the deepest melancholy.

"I am weary of life," he went on, after a short silence, "and I have not the courage to end it. I wish I were mistaken in what I have told you; but within the last few days more than one vivid gleam has flashed upon me. I did not wander about the rocks of le Croisic for my amusement, on my soul! The bitterness of my tone when, on my return, I found you talking to Camille, had its source in the depths of my wounded self-respect. I will have an explanation presently with Camille. Two minds so clear-sighted as hers and mine cannot deceive each other. Between two professional duellists a fight is soon ended. So I may at once announce my departure. Yes, I shall leave les Touches, to-morrow perhaps, with Conti.

"When we are no longer here, some strange—perhaps terrible—things will certainly happen, and I shall be sorry

not to look on at these struggles of passion, so rare in France, and so dramatic!—You are very young to enter on so perilous a fight; I am interested in you. But for the deep disgust I feel for women, I would stay to help you to play the game; it is difficult; you may lose it; you have two remarkable women to deal with, and you are already too much in love with one to make use of the other.

"Béatrix must surely have some tenacity in her nature, and Camille has magnanimity. You, perhaps, like some fragile and brittle thing, will be dashed between the two rocks, swept away by the torrent of passion. Take care."

Calyste's amazement on hearing these words allowed Claude Vignon to finish his speech and leave the lad, who remained in the position of a traveller in the Alps to whom his guide has proved the depth of an abyss by dropping a stone in.

He had heard from Claude himself that Camille loved him, Calyste, at the moment when he knew that his love for Béatrix would end only with his life. There was something in the situation too much for such a guileless young soul. Crushed by immense regret that weighed upon him for the past, killed by the perplexities of the present, between Béatrix, whom he loved, and Camille, whom he no longer loved, when Claude said that she loved him, the poor youth was desperate; he sat undecided, lost in thought. He vainly sought to guess the reasons for which Félicité had rejected his devotion, to go to Paris and accept that of Claude Vignon.

Now and again Madame de Rochefide's voice came to his ear, pure and clear, reviving the violent excitement from which he had fled in leaving the drawing-room. Several times he could hardly master himself so far as to restrain a fierce desire to seize her and snatch her away.—What would become of him? Could he ever come again to les Touches? Knowing that Camille loved him, how could he here worship Béatrix?—He could find no issue from his difficulties.

Gradually silence fell on the house. Without heeding it, he heard the shutting of doors. Then suddenly he counted the twelve strokes of midnight told by the clock in the next room, where the voices of Camille and Claude now roused him from the numbing contemplation of the future. A light shone there amid the darkness. Before he could show himself, he heard these dreadful words spoken by Vignon.

"You came back from Paris madly in love with Calyste," he was saying to Félicité. "But you were appalled at the consequences of such a passion at your age; it would lead you into a gulf, a hell—to suicide perhaps. Love can exist only in the belief that it is eternal, and you could foresee, a few paces before you in life, a terrible parting—weariness and old age putting a dreadful end to a beautiful poem. You remember 'Adolphe,' the disastrous termination of the loves of Madame de Stael and Benjamin Constant, who were, nevertheless, much better matched in age than you and Calyste.

"So, then, you took me, as men take fascines, to raise an intrenchment between yourself and the enemy. But while you tried to attach me to les Touches, was it not that you might spend your days in secret worship of your divinity. But to carry out such a scheme, at once unworthy and sublime, you should have chosen a common man, or a man so absorbed by lofty thought that he would be easily deceived. You fancied that I was simple, and as easy to cheat as a man of genius. I am, it would seem, no more than a clever man: I saw through you. When yesterday I sang the praises of women of your age, and explained to you why Calyste loved you, do you suppose that I thought all your ecstatic looks —brilliant, enchanting—were meant for me? Had I not already read your soul? The eyes, indeed, were fixed on mine, but the heart throbbed for Calyste.—You have never been loved, my poor Maupin; and you never will be now, after denying yourself the beautiful fruit which chance put in your way at the very gates of woman's hell, which must close at the touch of the figure 50."

"And why has love always avoided me?" she asked, in a broken voice. "You who know everything, tell me."

"Why, you are unamiable," said he; "you will not yield to love, you want it to yield to you. You can perhaps be led into the mischief and spirit of a schoolboy; but you have no youth of heart, your mind is too deep, you never were artless, and you cannot begin now. Your charm lies in mystery; it is abstract, and not practical. And, again, your power repels very powerful natures; they dread a conflict. Your strength may attract young souls, which, like Calyste's, love to feel protected; but, in the long run, it is fatiguing. You are superior, sublime! You must accept the disadvantages of these two qualities; they are wearisome."

"What a verdict!" cried Camille. "Can I never be a woman? Am I a monster?"

"Possibly," said Claude.

"We shall see," cried the woman, stung to the quick.

"Good-night, my dear. I leave to-morrow.—I owe you no grudge, Camille; I think you the greatest of women; but if I should consent to play the part any longer of a screen or a curtain," said Claude, with two marked inflections of his voice, "you would despise me utterly. We can part now without grief or remorse; we have no happiness to mourn for, no hopes to disappoint.

"To you, as to some infinitely rare men of genius, love is not what Nature made it—a vehement necessity, with acute but transient delights attached to its satisfaction, and then death; you regard it as what Christianity has made it: an ideal realm full of noble sentiments, of immense small things, of poetry and spiritual sensations, of sacrifices, flowers of morality, enchanting harmonies, placed far above all vulgar grossness, but whither two beings joined to be one angel are carried up on the wings of pleasure. This was what I hoped for; I thought I held one of the keys which open the door that is shut to so many persons, and through which we soar into infinitude. You were there already! And so I was deceived.

"I am going back to misery in my vast prison, Paris. Such a deception at the beginning of my career would have been enough to make me flee from woman; now, it fills my soul with such disenchantment as casts me forever into appalling solitude; I shall be destitute even of the faith which helped the Holy Fathers to people it with sacred visions.—This, my dear Camille, is what a superior nature brings us to. We may each of us sing the terrible chant that a poet has put into the mouth of Moses addressing the Almighty:

"'O Lord! Thou hast made me powerful and alone!'"

At this moment Calyste came in.

"I ought to let you know that I am here," said he.

Mademoiselle des Touches looked absolutely terrified; a sudden color flushed her calm features with a fiery red. All through the scene she was handsomer than she had ever been in her life.

"We thought you had gone, Calyste," said Claude; "but this involuntary indiscretion on both sides will have done no harm; perhaps you will feel more free at les Touches now that you know Félicité so completely. Her silence shows me that I was not mistaken as to the part she intended that I should play. She loves you, as I told you; but she loves you for yourself, and not for herself—a feeling which few women are fitted to conceive of or to cling to: very few of them know the delights of pain kept alive by desire. It is one of the grander passions reserved for men;—but she is somewhat of a man," he added, with a smile. "Your passion for Béatrix will torture her and make her happy, both at once."

Tears rose to Mademoiselle des Touches' eyes; she dared not look either at the merciless Claude or the ingenuous Calyste. She was frightened at having been understood; she had not supposed that any man, whatever his gifts, could divine such a torment of refined feeling, such lofty heroism as hers. And Calyste, seeing her so humiliated at finding her magnanimity betrayed, sympathized with the

agitation of the woman he had placed so high, and whom he beheld so stricken. By an irresistible impulse, he fell at Camille's feet and kissed her hands, hiding his tear-washed face in them.

"Claude!" she cried, "do not desert me; what will become of me?"

"What have you to fear?" replied the critic. "Calyste already loves the Marquise like a madman. You can certainly have no stronger barrier between him and yourself than this passion fanned into life by your own act. It is quite as effectual as I could be. Yesterday there was danger for you and for him; but to-day everything will give you maternal joys," and he gave her a mocking glance. "You will be proud of his triumphs."

Félicité looked at Calyste, who, at these words, raised his head with a hasty movement. Claude Vignon was sufficiently revenged by the pleasure he took in seeing their confusion.

"You pushed him toward Madame de Rochefide," Vignon went on; "he is now under the spell. You have dug your own grave. If you had but trusted yourself to me, you would have avoided the disasters that await you."

"Disasters!" cried Camille Maupin, raising Calyste's head to the level of her own, kissing his hair, and wetting it with her tears. "No, Calyste. Forget all you have just heard, and count me for nothing!"

She stood up in front of the two men, drawn to her full height, quelling them by the lightnings that flashed from her eyes in which all her soul shone.

"While Claude was speaking," she went on, "I saw all the beauty, the dignity of hopeless love; is it not the only sentiment that brings us near to God?—Do not love me, Calyste; but I—I will love you as no other woman can ever love!"

It was the wildest cry that ever a wounded eagle sent out from his eyry. Claude, on one knee, took her hand and kissed it.

"Now go, my dear boy," said Mademoiselle des Touches to Calyste; "your mother may be uneasy."

Calyste returned to Guérande at a leisurely pace, turning round to see the light which shone from the windows of Béatrix's rooms. He was himself surprised that he felt so little pity for Camille; he was almost annoyed with her for having deprived him of fifteen months of happiness. And again, now and then, he felt the same thrill in himself that Camille had just caused him, he felt the tears she had shed on his hair, he suffered in her suffering, he fancied he could hear the moans—for, no doubt, she was moaning—of this wonderful woman for whom he had so longed a few days since.

As he opened the courtyard gate at home, where all was silent, he saw through the window his mother working by the primitive lamp while waiting for him. Tears rose to his eyes at the sight.

"What more has happened?" asked Fanny, her face expressive of terrible anxiety. Calyste's only reply was to clasp his mother in his arms and kiss her cheeks, her forehead, her hair, with the passionate effusion which delights a mother, infusing into her the subtle fires of the life she gave.

"It is you that I love!" said Calyste to his mother, blushing, and almost shamefaced; "you who live for me alone, whom I would fain make happy."

"But you are not in your usual frame of mind, my child," said the Baroness, looking at her son. "What has happened?"

"Camille loves me," said he; "and I no longer love her."

The Baroness drew him toward her and kissed him on the forehead, and in the deep silence of the gloomy old tapestried room he could hear the rapid beating of his mother's heart. The Irishwoman was jealous of Camille, and had suspected the truth. While awaiting her son night

after night she had studied that woman's passion; led by the light of persistent meditation, she had entered into Camille's heart; and without being able to account for it, she had understood that in that unwedded soul there was a sort of motherly affection. Calyste's story horrified this simple and guileless mother.

"Well," said she, after a pause, "love Madame de Rochefide; she will cause me no sorrow."

Béatrix was not free; she could not upset any of the plans they had made for Calyste's happiness, at least so Fanny thought; she saw in her a sort of daughter-in-law to love, and not a rival mother to contend with.

"But Béatrix will never love me!" cried Calyste.

"Perhaps," replied the Baroness, with a knowing air. "Did you not say that she is to be alone to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"Well, my child," said the mother, coloring, "jealousy lurks in all our hearts, but I did not know that I should ever find it at the bottom of my own, for I did not think that any one would try to rob me of my Calyste's affection!" She sighed. "I fancied," she went on, "that marriage would be to you what it was to me. What lights you have thrown on my mind during these two months! What colors are reflected on your very natural passion, my poor darling!—Well, still seem to love your Mademoiselle des Touches; the Marquise will be jealous of her, and will be yours."

"Oh, my sweet mother, Camille would never have told me that!" cried Calyste, taking his mother by the waist, and kissing her in the neck.

"You make me very wicked, you bad child," said she, quite happy at seeing the beaming face hope gave to her son, who gayly went up the winding stairs.

Next morning Calyste desired Gasselin to stand on the road from Guérande to Saint-Nazaire, and watch for Mademoiselle des Touches' carriage; then, as it went past, he was to count the persons in it.

Gasselin returned just as the family had sat down together at breakfast.

"What can have happened?" said Mademoiselle du Guénic; "Gasselin is running as if Guérande were burning."

"He must have caught the rat," said Mariotte, who was bringing in the coffee, milk, and toast.

"He is coming from the town and not from the garden," replied the blind woman.

"But the rat's hole is behind the wall to the front by the street," said Mariotte.

"Monsieur le Chevalier, there were five of them; four inside and the coachman."

"Two ladies on the back seat?" asked Calyste.

"And two gentlemen in front," replied Gasselin.

"Saddle my father's horse, ride after them; be at Saint-Nazaire by the time the boat starts for Paimbœuf; and if the two men go on board, come back and tell me as fast as you can gallop."

Gasselin went.

"Why, nephew, you have the very devil in you!" exclaimed old aunt Zéphirine.

"Let him please himself, sister," cried the Baron. "He was as gloomy as an owl, and now he is as merry as a lark."

"Perhaps you told him that our dear Charlotte was coming," said the old lady, turning to her sister-in-law.

"No," replied the Baroness.

"I thought he might wish to go to meet her," said Mademoiselle du Guénic slyly.

"If Charlotte is to stay three months with her aunt, he has time enough to see her in," replied the Baroness.

"Why, sister, what has occurred since yesterday," asked the old lady. "You were so delighted to think that Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel was going this morning to fetch her niece."

"Jacqueline wants me to marry Charlotte to snatch me from perdition, aunt," said Calyste, laughing, and giving

his mother a look of intelligence. "I was on the Mall this morning when Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel was talking to Monsieur du Halga; she did not reflect that it would be far worse perdition for me to be married at my age."

"It is written above," cried the old aunt, interrupting Calyste, "that I am to die neither happy nor at peace. I should have liked to see our family continued, and some of our lands redeemed—but nothing of the kind! Can you, my fine nephew, put anything in the scale to outweigh such duties as these?"

"Why," said the Baron, "can Mademoiselle des Touches hinder Calyste from marrying in due course? I must go to see her."

"I can assure you, father, that Félicité will never be an obstacle in the way of my marriage."

"I cannot make head or tail of it!" said the blind woman, who knew nothing of her nephew's sudden passion for the Marquise de Rochefide.

The mother kept her son's secret; in such matters silence is instinctive in all women. The old aunt sank into deep meditation, listening with all her might, spying every voice, every sound, to guess the mystery they were keeping from her.

Gasselin soon returned, and told his young master that he had not needed to go so far as Saint-Nazaire to learn that Mademoiselle des Touches and the lady would return alone; he had heard it in the town, from Bernus the carrier, who had taken charge of the gentlemen's baggage.

"They will come back alone?" said Calyste. "Bring out my horse."

Gasselin supposed from his young master's voice that there was something serious on hand; he saddled both the horses, loaded the pistols without saying anything, and dressed to ride out with Calyste. Calyste was so delighted to know that Claude and Gennaro were gone that he never thought of the party he would meet at Saint-Nazaire; he thought only of the pleasure of escorting the Mar-

quise. He took his old father's hands and pressed them affectionately, he kissed his mother, and put his arm round his old aunt's waist.

"Well, at any rate I like him better thus than when he is sad," said old Zéphirine.

"Where are you off to, Chevalier?" asked his father.

"To Saint-Nazaire."

"The deuce you are! And when is the wedding to be?" said the Baron, who thought he was in a hurry to see Charlotte de Kergarouet. "I should like to be a grandfather; it is high time."

When Gasselin showed his evident intention of riding out with Calyste, it occurred to the young man that he might return in Camille's carriage with Béatrix, leaving his horse in Gasselin's care, and he clapped the man on the shoulder, saying: "That was well thought of."

"So I should think," replied Gasselin.

"Spare the horses, my boy," said his father, coming out on the steps with Fanny, "they have twelve leagues before them."

Calyste exchanged looks full of meaning with his mother, and was gone.

"Dearest treasure!" said she, seeing him bend his head under the top of the gate.

"God preserve him!" replied the Baron, "for we shall never make another."

This little speech, in the rather coarse taste of a country gentleman, made the Baroness shiver.

"My nephew is not so much in love with Charlotte as to rush to meet her," said old Mademoiselle to Mariotte, who was clearing the table.

"Oh, a fine lady has come to les Touches, a Marquise, and he is running after her. Well, well, he is young!" said Mariotte.

"Those women will be the death of him," said Mademoiselle du Guénic.

"That won't kill him, Mademoiselle, quite the con-

trary," replied Mariotte, who seemed quite happy in Calyste's happiness.

Calyste was riding at a pace that might have killed his horse, when Gasselin very happily asked his master whether he wished to arrive before the departure of the boat; this was by no means his purpose; he had no wish to be seen by either Conti or Vignon. The young man reined in his horse and looked complacently at the double furrow traced by the wheels of the carriage on the sandy parts of the road. He was wildly gay merely at the thought: "She passed this way; she will come back this way; her eyes rested on those woods, on these trees!"

"What a pretty road!" said he to Gasselin.

"Yes, sir, Brittany is the finest country in the world," replied the servant. "Are there such flowers in the hedges, or green lanes that wind like this one, anywhere else to be found?"

"Nowhere, Gasselin."

"Here comes Bernus' carriage," said Gasselin.

"Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel will be in it with her niece; let us hide," said Calyste.

"Hide here, sir! are you crazy? We are in the midst of the sands."

The carriage, which was in fact crawling up a sandy hill above Saint-Nazaire, presently appeared, in all the artless simplicity of rude Breton construction. To Calyste's great astonishment, the conveyance was full.

"We have left Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel and her sister and her niece in a great pother," said the driver to Gasselin; "all the places had been taken by the custom-house."

"I am done for!" cried Calyste. The vehicle was in fact full of custom-house men, on their way, no doubt, to relieve those in charge at the salt-marshes.

When Calyste reached the little esplanade surrounding the Church of Saint-Nazaire, whence there is a view of Paimbœuf and of the majestic estuary of the Loire where it struggles with the tide, he found Camille and the Mar-

quise waving their handkerchiefs to bid a last farewell to the two passengers borne away by the steam packet. Béatrix was quite bewitching, her face tenderly shaded by the reflection from a rice-straw hat on which poppies were lightly piled, tied by a scarlet ribbon; in a flowered muslin dress, one little slender foot put forward in a green gaitered shoe, leaning on her slight parasol-stick, and waving her well-gloved hand. Nothing is more strikingly effective than a woman on a rock, like a statue on its pedestal.

Conti could see Calyste go up to Camille.

"I thought," said the youth to Mademoiselle des Touches, "that you two ladies would be returning alone."

"That was very nice of you, Calyste," she replied, taking his hand. Béatrix looked round, glanced at her young adorer, and gave him the most imperious flash at her command. A smile that the Marquise caught on Camille's eloquent lips made her feel the vulgarity of this impulse, worthy of a mere *bourgeoise*. Madame de Rochefide then said with a smile to Calyste:

"And was it not rather impertinent to suppose that I could bore Camille on the way?"

"My dear, one man for two widows is not much in the way," said Mademoiselle des Touches, taking Calyste's arm, and leaving Béatrix to gaze after the boat.

At this instant Calyste heard in the street of what must be called the port of Saint-Nazaire the voices of Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel, Charlotte, and Gasselin, all three chattering like magpies. The old maid was catechising Gasselin, and wanted to know what had brought him and his master to Saint-Nazaire; Mademoiselle des Touches' carriage had made a commotion.

Before the lad could escape, Charlotte had caught sight of him.

"There is Calyste!" cried the girl.

"Go and offer them my carriage; their woman can sit by my coachman," said Camille, who knew that Madame

de Kergarouet with her daughter and Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel had failed to get places.

Calyste, who could not avoid obeying Camille, went to deliver this message. As soon as she knew that she would have to ride with the Marquise de Rochefide and the famous Camille Maupin, Madame de Kergarouet ignored her elder sister's objections; Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel refused to avail herself of what she called the devil's chariot. At Nantes people lived in rather more civilized latitudes than at Guérande; Camille was admired; she was regarded as the Muse of Brittany and an honor to the country; she excited as much curiosity as jealousy. The absolution granted her in Paris by the fashionable world was consecrated by Mademoiselle des Touches' fine fortune, and perhaps by her former successes at Nantes, which was proud of having been the birthplace of Camille Maupin.

So the Viscountess, crazy with curiosity, dragged away her old sister, turning a deaf ear to her jeremiads.

"Good-morning, Calyste," said little Charlotte.

"Good-morning, Charlotte," replied Calyste, but he did not offer her his arm.

Both speechless with surprise, she at his coldness, he at his own cruelty, they went up the hollow ravine that is called a street at Saint-Nazaire, following the two sisters in silence. In an instant the girl of sixteen saw the castle in the air which her romantic hopes had built and furnished crumble into ruins. She and Calyste had so constantly played together during their childhood, they had been so intimately connected, that she imagined her future life secure. She had hurried on, carried away by heedless happiness, like a bird rushing down on a field of wheat; she was checked in her flight without being able to imagine what the obstacle could be.

"What is the matter, Calyste?" she asked, taking his hand.

"Nothing," he replied, withdrawing his hand with terrible haste as he thought of his aunt's schemes and Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel's.

Tears filled Charlotte's eyes. She looked at the handsome youth without animosity; but she was to feel the first pangs of jealousy and know the dreadful rage of rivalry at the sight of the two Parisian beauties, which led her to suspect the cause of Calyste's coldness.

Charlotte de Kergarouet was of middle height; she had rustic rosy cheeks, a round face with wide-awake black eyes that affected intelligence, a quantity of brown hair, a round waist, flat back, and thin arms, and the crisp, decided tone of speech adopted by country-bred girls who do not wish to seem simpletons. She was the spoiled child of the family in consequence of her aunt's preference for her. At this moment she was wearing the plaid tweed cloak lined with green silk that she had put on for the passage in the steamboat. Her travelling gown of cheap stuff, with a chaste gathered body and a finely plaited collar, would presently strike her as being hideous in comparison with the fresh morning dress worn by Béatrix and Camille. She would be painfully conscious of stockings soiled on the rocks and the boats she had jumped into, of old leather shoes, chosen especially that there might be nothing good to spoil on the journey, as is the manner and custom of provincial folk.

As to the Vicomtesse de Kergarouet, she was typically provincial. Tall, lean, faded, full of covert pretentiousness which only showed when it was wounded, a great talker, and by dint of talk picking up a few ideas as a billiard-player makes a cannon, which gave her a reputation for brilliancy; trying to snub Parisians by a display of blunt country shrewdness, and an assumption of perfect contentment constantly paraded; stooping in the hope of being picked up, and furious at being left on her knees; fishing for compliments, as the English have it, and not always catching them; dressing in a style at once exaggerated and slatternly; fancying that a lack of politeness was lofty impertinence, and that she could distress people greatly by paying them no attention; refusing things she wished for to have them offered a second time and pressed on her beyond reason; her head full of ex-

tinct subjects, and much astonished to find herself behind the times; finally, hardly able to abstain for one hour from dragging in Nantes, and the small lions of Nantes, and the gossip of the upper ten of Nantes; complaining of Nantes and criticising Nantes, and then regarding as a personal affront the concurrence extorted from the politeness of those who rashly agreed with all she said.

Her manners, her speech, and her ideas had to some extent rubbed off on her four daughters.

To meet Camille Maupin and Madame de Rochefide! Here was fame for the future, and matter for a hundred conversations! She marched on the church as if to take it by storm, flourishing her handkerchief, which she unfolded to show the corners ponderously embroidered at home, and trimmed with worn-out lace. She had a rather stalwart gait, which did not matter in a woman of seven-and-forty.

"Monsieur le Chevalier," said she, and she pointed to Calyste, who was following sulkily enough with Charlotte, "has informed us of your amiable offer; but my sister, my daughter, and I fear we shall incommode you."

"Not I, sister; I shall not inconvenience these ladies," said the old maid sharply. "I can surely find a horse in Saint-Nazaire to carry me home."

Camille and Béatrix exchanged sidelong looks, which Calyste noted, and that glance was enough to annihilate every memory of his youth, all his belief in the Kergarouet-Pen-Hoels, and to wreck forever the schemes laid by the two families.

"Five can sit quite easily in the carriage," replied Mademoiselle des Touches, on whom Jacqueline had turned her back. "Even if we were horribly squeezed, which is impossible, as you are all so slight, I should be amply compensated by the pleasure of doing a service to friends of Calyste's. Your maid, Madame, will find a seat; and your bundles, if you have any, can be put in the rumble; I have no servant with me."

The Viscountess was profusely grateful, and blamed her

sister Jacqueline, who had been in such a hurry for her niece that she would not give her time to travel by land in their carriage; to be sure, the post road was not only longer, but expensive; she must return immediately to Nantes, where she had left three more little kittens eager to have her back again—and she stroked her daughter's chin. But Charlotte put on a little victimized air as she looked up at her mother, which made it seem likely that the Viscountess bored her four daughters most consumedly by trotting them out as persistently as, in "Tristram Shandy," Corporal Trim puts his cap on.

"You are a happy mother, and you must—" Camille began; but she broke off, remembering that Béatrix must have deserted her boy to follow Conti.

"Oh!" said the Viscountess, "though it is my misfortune to spend my life in the country and at Nantes, I have the comfort of knowing that my children adore me. Have you any children?" she asked Camille.

"I am Mademoiselle des Touches," replied Camille. "Madame is the Marquise de Rochefide."

"Then you are to be pitied for not knowing the greatest happiness we poor mere women can have. Is it not so, Madame?" said she to the Marquise, to remedy her blunder. "But you have many compensations."

A hot tear welled up in Béatrix's eyes; she turned hastily away and went to the clumsy parapet at the edge of the rock, whither Calyste followed her.

"Madame," said Camille in a low voice to Madame de Kergarouet, "do you not know that the Marquise is separated from her husband, that she has not seen her son for two years, and does not know when they may meet again?"

"Dear!" cried Madame de Kergarouet. "Poor lady! Is it a judicial separation?"

"No, incompatibility," said Camille.

"I can quite understand that," replied the Viscountess undaunted.

Old Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel had intrenched herself a

few yards off with her dear Charlotte. Calyste, after assuring himself that no one could see them, took the Marquise's hand and kissed it, leaving a tear on it. Béatrix turned on him, her eyes dried by anger; some cruel word was on her tongue, but she could say nothing as she saw the tears on the beautiful face of the angelic youth, as deeply moved as she was.

"Good heavens, Calyste!" said Camille in a whisper as he rejoined them with Madame de Rochefide, "you will have *that* for a mother-in-law, and that little baby for your wife."

"Because her aunt is rich," added Calyste sarcastically.

The whole party now moved toward the inn, and the Viscountess thought it incumbent on her to make some satirical remarks to Camille on the savages of Saint-Nazaire.

"I love Brittany, Madame," replied Félicité gravely. "I was born at Guérande."

Calyste could not help admiring Mademoiselle des Touches, who, by the tones of her voice, her steady gaze, and placid manners, put him at his ease, notwithstanding the terrible confessions of the scene that had taken place last night. Still, she looked tired; her features betrayed that she had not slept; they looked thickened, but the forehead suppressed the internal storm with relentless calm.

"What queens!" said he to Charlotte, pointing to Béatrix and Camille, as he gave the girl his arm, to Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel's great satisfaction.

"What notion was this of your mother's," said the old lady, also giving a lean arm to her niece, "to throw us into the company of this wretched woman?"

"Oh, aunt! a woman who is the glory of Brittany."

"The disgrace, child!—Do not let me see you too cringing to her."

"Mademoiselle Charlotte is right," said Calyste; "you are unjust."

"Oh, she has bewitched you!" retorted Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel.

"I have the same friendship for her that I have for you," said Calyste.

"How long have the du Guénics taken to lying?" said the old woman.

"Since the Pen-Hoels took to being deaf," retorted Calyste.

"Then you are not in love with her?" asked the aunt, delighted.

"I was, but I am no longer," he replied.

"Bad boy! Then why have you given us so much anxiety? I knew that love was but a folly; only marriage is to be relied on," said she, looking at Charlotte.

Charlotte, somewhat reassured, hoped to reconquer her advantages by an appeal to the memories of their childhood, and clung to Calyste's arm; but he vowed to himself that he would come to a clear understanding with the little heiress.

"Oh, what famous games of *mouche* we will have, Calyste," said she, "and what capital fun!"

The horses were put in; Camille made the Viscountess and Charlotte take the best seats, for Jacqueline had disappeared; then she and the Marquise sat with their back to the horses. Calyste, forced to give up the pleasure he had promised himself, rode at the side of the carriage; and the horses, all tired, went slowly enough to allow of his gazing at Béatrix.

History has kept no record of the singular conversation of these four persons, so strangely thrown together by chance in this carriage; for it is impossible to accept the hundred and something versions which were current at Nantes as to the stories, the repartees, and the witticisms which Madame de Kergarouet heard from Camille Maupin *himself*. She took good care not to repeat, nor even understand, the replies made by Mademoiselle des Touches to all her ridiculous inquiries—such as writers so often hear, and by which they are made to pay dearly for their few joys.

"How do you write your books?" asked Madame de Kergarouet.

"Why, just as you do your needlework," said Camille, "your netting, or cross-stitch."

"And where did you find all those deep observations and attractive pictures?"

"Where you find all the clever things you say, Madame. —Nothing is easier than writing, and if you chose—"

"Ah, it all lies in the choosing? I should never have thought it!—And which of your works do you yourself prefer?"

"It is difficult to have any preference for these little kittens."

"You are surfeited with compliments; it is impossible to say anything new."

"Believe me, Madame, I appreciate the form you give to yours."

The Viscountess, anxious not to seem neglectful of the Marquise, said, looking archly at her: "I shall never forget this drive, sitting between wit and beauty."

The Marquise laughed.

"You flatter me, Madame," said she. "It is not in nature that wit should be noticed in the company of genius, and I have not yet said much."

Charlotte, keenly alive to her mother's absurdity, looked at her, hoping to check her; but the Viscountess still valiantly showed fight against the two laughing Parisian ladies. Calyste, trotting at an easy pace by the carriage, could only see the two women on the back seat, and his eyes fell on them alternately, betraying a very melancholy mood. Béatrix, who could not help being seen, persistently avoided looking at the youth; with a placidity that is maddening to a lover, she sat with her hands folded over her crossed shawl, and seemed lost in deep meditation.

At a spot where the road is shaded and as moist and green as a cool forest path, where the wheels of the carriage were scarcely audible, and the wind brought a resinous scent, Camille remarked on the beauty of the place, and, leaning her hand on Béatrix's knee, she pointed to Calyste and said:

"How well he rides!"

"Calyste?" said Madame de Kergarouet. "He is a capital horseman."

"Oh, Calyste is so nice!" said Charlotte.

"There are so many Englishmen just like him—" replied the Marquise indifferently, without finishing her sentence.

"His mother is Irish—an O'Brien," said Charlotte, feeling personally attacked.

Camille and the Marquise drove into Guérande with the Vicomtesse de Kergarouet and her daughter, to the great astonishment of the gaping townspeople; they left their travelling companions at the corner of the little Rue du Guénic, where there was something very like a crowd. Calyste had ridden on to announce to his mother the arrival of the party, who were expected to dinner. The meal had been politely put off till four o'clock.

The Chevalier went back to give the ladies his arm; he kissed Camille's hand, hoping to touch that of the Marquise, but she firmly kept her arms folded, and he besought her in vain with eyes sparkling through wasted tears.

"You little goose!" said Camille in his ear, with a light, friendly kiss on it.

"True enough!" said Calyste to himself as the carriage turned. "I forget my mother's counsels—but I believe I always shall forget them."

Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel, who arrived valiantly mounted on a hired nag, Madame de Kergarouet, and Charlotte found the table laid, and were cordially, if not luxuriously, received by the du Guénics. Old Zéphirine had sent for certain bottles of fine wine from the depths of the cellar, and Mariotte had surpassed herself in Breton dishes. The Viscountess, delighted to have travelled with the famous Camille Maupin, tried to expatiate on modern literature, and the place held in it by Camille; but as it had been with the game of whist, so it was with literary matters; neither the du Guénics, nor the Curé, who looked in, nor the Chevalier du Halga understood

anything about them. The Abbé and the old naval officer sipped the liqueurs at dessert.

As soon as Mariotte, helped by Gasselin and by Madame de Kergarouet's maid, had cleared the table, there was an enthusiastic clamor for *mouche*. Joy prevailed. Everybody believed Calyste to be free, and saw him married ere long to little Charlotte. Calyste sat silent. For the first time in his life he was making comparisons between the Kergarouets and the two elegant and clever women, full of taste, who, at this very moment, were probably laughing at the two provincials, if he might judge from the first glances they had exchanged. Fanny, knowing Calyste's secret, noticed his dejection. Charlotte's coquetting and her mother's attacks had no effect on him. Her dear boy was evidently bored; his body was in this room, where of yore he could have been amused by the absurdities of *mouche*, but his spirit was wandering round les Touches.

"How can I send him off to Camille's?" thought the mother, who loved him, and who was bored because he was bored. Her affection lent her inventiveness.

"You are dying to be off to les Touches to see *her?*" she whispered to Calyste.

The boy's answer was a smile and a blush that thrilled this devoted mother to her heart's very core.

"Madame," said she to the Viscountess, "you will be very uncomfortable to-morrow in the carrier's chaise, and obliged to start very early in the morning. Would it not be better if you were to have Mademoiselle des Touches' carriage? Go over, Calyste," said she, turning to her son, "and arrange the matter at les Touches; but come back quickly."

"It will not take ten minutes," cried Calyste, giving his mother a wild hug out on the steps, whither she followed him.

Calyste flew with the speed of a fawn, and was in the entrance hall of les Touches just as Camille and Béatrix came out of the dining-room after dinner. He had the wit to offer his arm to Félicité.

"You have deserted the Viscountess and her daughter for us," said she, pressing his arm. "We are able to appreciate the extent of the sacrifice."

"Are these Kergarouets related to the Portenduères and old Admiral de Kergarouet, whose widow married Charles de Vandenesse?" Madame de Rochefide asked Camille.

"Mademoiselle Charlotte is the Admiral's grandniece," replied Camille.

"She is a charming young person," said Béatrix, seating herself in a Gothic armchair; "the very thing for Monsieur du Guénic."

"That marriage shall never be!" cried Camille vehemently.

Calyste, overwhelmed by the cold indifference of the Marquise, who spoke of the little country girl as the only creature for whom he was a match, sat speechless and bewildered.

"And why not, Camille?" said Madame de Rochefide.

"My dear," said Camille, seeing Calyste's despair, "I did not advise Conti to get married, and I believe I was delightful to him—you are ungenerous."

Béatrix looked at her with surprise mingled with indefinable suspicions. Calyste almost understood Camille's self-immolation as he saw the pale flush rise in her cheeks, which, in her, betrayed the most violent emotions: he went up to her awkwardly enough, took her hand, and kissed it. Camille sat down to the piano with an easy air, as if equally sure of her friend and of the lover she had claimed, turning her back upon them, and leaving them to each other. She improvised some variations on airs, unconsciously suggested by her thoughts, for they were all deeply sad. The Marquise appeared to be listening; but she was watching Calyste, who was too young and too guileless to play the part suggested to him by Camille, and sat lost in ecstasy before his real idol. At the end of an hour, during which Mademoiselle des Touches gave herself up to her jealous feelings, Béatrix went to her room.

Camille at once led Calyste into her own room, so as not to be overheard, for women have an admirable sense of distrust.

"My child," said she, "you must pretend to love me or you are lost. You are a perfect child; you know nothing about women, you know only how to love. To love and to be loved are two very different things. You are rushing into terrible suffering. I want you to be happy. If you provoke Béatrix, not in her pride, but in her obstinacy, she is capable of flying off to join Conti at a few leagues from Paris. Then what would become of you?"

"I should love her," replied Calyste.

"You would not see her again."

"Oh, yes, I should," said he.

"Pray how?"

"I should follow her."

"But you are as poor as Job, my dear child!"

"My father, Gasselin, and I lived in la Vendée for three months on a hundred and fifty francs, marching day and night."

"Calyste," said Félicité, "listen to me. I see you are too honest to act a part; I do not wish to corrupt so pure a nature as yours. I will take it all on myself. Béatrix shall love you."

"Is it possible?" he cried, clasping his hands.

"Yes," said Camille. "But we must undo the vows she had made to herself. I will lie for you. Only, do not interfere in any way with the arduous task I am about to undertake. The Marquise has much aristocratic cunning; she is intellectually suspicious; no hunter ever had to take more difficult game; so in this case, my poor boy, the sportsman must take his dog's advice. Will you promise to obey me blindly? I will be your Fox," said she, naming Calyste's best hound.

"What then am I to do?" replied the young man.

"Very little," said Camille. "Come here every day at noon. I, like an impatient mistress, shall always be at the

window of the corridor that looks out on the Guérande road to see you coming. I shall fly to my room so as not to be seen—not to let you know the depth of a passion that is a burden on you; but sometimes you will see me and wave your handkerchief to me. Then in the courtyard, and as you come upstairs, you must put on a look of some annoyance. That will be no dissimulation, my child," said she, leaning her head on his breast, "will it?—Do not hurry up; look out of the staircase window on to the garden to look for Béatrix. When she is there—and she will be there, never fear—if she sees you, come straight, but very slowly, to the little drawing-room, and thence to my room. If you should see me at the window spying your treachery, you must start back that I may not catch you imploring a glance from Béatrix. Once in my room you will be my prisoner.—Yes; we will sit there till four o'clock. You may spend the time in reading; I will smoke. You will be horribly bored by not seeing her, but I will provide you with interesting books. You have read nothing of George Sand's; I will send a man to-night to buy her works at Nantes, and those of some other writers that are unknown to you.

"I shall be the first to leave the room; you must not put down your book or come into the little drawing-room till you hear Béatrix in there talking to me. Whenever you see a music-book open on the piano, you can ask if you may stay. You may be positively rude to me if you can; I give you leave; all will be well."

"I know, Camille," said he, with delightful good faith, "that you have the rarest affection for me; it makes me quite sorry that I ever saw Béatrix; but what do you hope for?"

"In a week Béatrix will be crazy about you."

"Good God!" cried he, "is that possible?" and, clasping his hands, he fell on his knees before Camille, who was touched and happy to give him such joy at her own cost.

"Listen to me," said she. "If you speak to the Marquise—not merely in the way of conversation, but if you exchange

even a few words with her—if you allow her to question you, if you fail in the worldless part I set you to play, and which is certainly easy enough, understand clearly," and she spoke in a serious tone, "you will lose her forever."

"I do not understand anything of all this, Camille," cried Calyste, looking at her with adorable guilelessness.

"If you understood, you would not be the exquisite child that you are, the noble, handsome Calyste," said she, taking his hand and kissing it.

And Calyste did what he had never done before; he put his arm round Camille and kissed her gently in the neck, without passion, but tenderly, as he kissed his mother. Mademoiselle des Touches could not restrain a burst of tears.

"Now go, child," said she, "and tell your Viscountess that my carriage is at her orders."

Calyste wanted to stay, but he was obliged to obey Camille's imperious and imperative gesture. He went home in high spirits, for he was sure of being loved within a week by the beautiful Rochefide.

The *mouche* players found in him the Calyste they had lost these two months. Charlotte ascribed the change to her own presence. Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel was affectionately teasing. The Abbé Grimont tried to read in the Baroness's eyes the reason for the calm he saw there. The Chevalier du Halga rubbed his hands.

The two old maids were as lively as a couple of lizards. The Viscountess owed five francs' worth of accumulated fines. Zéphirine's avarice was so keenly excited that she lamented her inability to see the cards, and was sharply severe on her sister-in-law, who was distracted from the game by Calyste's good spirits, and who asked him a question now and then without understanding his replies.

The game went on till eleven o'clock. Two players had retired; the Baron and du Halga were asleep in their arm-chairs. Mariotte had made some buckwheat cakes; the Baroness brought out her tea-caddy; and before the Ker-

garouets left, the noble house of du Guénic offered its guests a collation, with fresh butter, fruit, and cream, for which the silver teapot was brought out, and the English china tea-service sent to the Baroness by one of her aunts. This air of modern splendor in that antique room, the Baroness's exquisite grace, accustomed as a good Irishwoman to make and pour out tea, a great business with Englishwomen, were really delightful. The greatest luxury would not have given such a simple, unpretending, and dignified effect as this impulse of glad hospitality.

When there was no one left in the room but the Baroness and her son, she looked inquiringly at Calyste.

"What happened this evening at les Touches?" she asked.

Calyste told her of the hope Camille had put into his heart and of her strange instructions.

"Poor woman!" exclaimed Fanny, clasping her hands, and for the first time pitying Mademoiselle des Touches.

Some minutes after Calyste had left, Béatrix, who had heard him leave the house, came into her friend's room, and found her sunk on a sofa, her eyes wet with tears.

"What is the matter, Félicité?" asked the Marquise.

"That I am forty and in love, my dear!" said Mademoiselle des Touches, in a tone of terrible fury, her eyes suddenly dry and hard. "If only you could know, Béatrix, how many tears I shed daily over the lost days of my youth! To be loved out of pity, to know that one's pittance of happiness is earned by painful toil, by catlike tricks, by snares laid for the innocence and virtue of a mere boy—is not that shameful? Happily, we find a sort of absolution in the infinitude of passion, in the energy of happiness, in the certainty of being forever supreme above other women in a young heart, on which our name is graven by unforgettable pleasure and insane self-sacrifice. Yes, if he asked it of me, I would throw myself into the sea at his least signal. Sometimes I catch myself wishing that he would desire it; it would be a sacrifice, and not suicide.

"Oh! Béatrix, in coming here you set me a cruel task! I know how difficult it is to triumph against you; but you love Conti, you are noble and generous, and you will not deceive me; on the contrary, you will help me to preserve my Calyste. I was prepared for the impression you would make on him, but I have not been so foolish as to seem jealous; that would but add fuel to the fire. On the contrary, I announced your arrival, depicting you in such bright colors that you could never come up to the portrait, and unluckily you are handsomer than ever."

This vehement lament, in which truth and untruth were mingled, completely deceived Madame de Rochefide. Claude Vignon had told Conti his reasons for leaving; Béatrix was, of course, informed, so she showed magnanimity by behaving coldly to Calyste; but at this instant there awoke in her that thrill of joy which every woman feels at the bottom of her heart on hearing that she is loved. The love she inspires in any man implies an unfeigned flattery which it is impossible not to appreciate; but when the man belongs to another woman, his homage gives more than joy, it is heavenly bliss. Béatrix sat down by her friend, and was full of little coaxing ways.

"You have not a white hair," said she; "you have not a wrinkle; your temples are smooth still, while I know many a woman of thirty obliged to cover hers. Look, my dear," she added, raising her curls, "what my journey cost me."

She showed the faintest pucker that ruffled the surface of her exquisite skin; she turned up her sleeve and displayed the same wrinkles on her wrists, where the transparent texture already showed lines, and a network of swollen veins, and three deep marks made a bracelet of furrows.

"Are not these the two spots which can tell no lies, as a writer, investigating our miseries, has said? We must suffer much before we see the truth of his terrible shrewdness; but, happily for us, most men know nothing about it, and do not read that atrocious writer."

"Your letter told me all," replied Camille. "Happiness

is not fatuous; you boasted too much of yours. In love, truth is deaf, dumb, and blind. And I, knowing you had reasons for throwing over Conti, dreaded your visit here. My dear, Calyste is an angel; he is as good as he is handsome; the poor innocent will not resist one look from you, he admires you too much not to love on the smallest encouragement; your disdain will preserve him to me. I confess it with the cowardice of true passion: if you take him from me, you kill me. 'Adolphe,' that terrible book by Benjamin Constant, has told us of Adolphe's sufferings; but what of the woman's, heh? He did not study them enough to depict them, and what woman would dare reveal them? They would discredit our sex, humiliate our virtues, add to our vices. Ah! if I may measure them by my fears, these tortures are like the torments of hell. But if he deserts me, my determination is fixed."

"And what have you determined?" asked Béatrix, with an eagerness that was a shock to Camille.

On this the two friends looked at each other with the keenness of two Venetian inquisitors of State, a swift glance, in which their souls met and struck fire like two flints. The Marquise's eyes fell.

"Besides man there is only God!" said the famous woman gravely. "God is the unknown. I should cast myself into it as into a gulf. Calyste has just sworn that he admires you only as he might admire a picture; but you are eight-and-twenty, and in all the splendor of your beauty. So the struggle between him and me has begun by a falsehood. Happily I know how to win."

"And how is that?"

"That, my dear, is my secret. Leave me the advantages of my age. Though Claude Vignon has cast me into the abyss—me, when I had raised myself to a spot which I believed to be inaccessible—I may at least pluck the pale blossoms, etiolated but delicious, which grow at the foot of the precipice."

Madame de Rochefide was molded like wax by Madem-

oiselle des Touches, who revelled in savage pleasure as she involved her in her meshes. Camille sent her to bed, nettled with curiosity, tossed between jealousy and generosity, but certainly thinking much about the handsome youth.

"She would be delighted if she could betray me," said Camille to herself, as they kissed and said good-night.

Then, when she was alone, the author made way for the woman—she melted into tears; she filled her hookah with tobacco dipped in opium, and spent the greater part of the night, smoking, and thus numbing the tortures of her love, while seeing, through the clouds of smoke, Calyste's charming head.

"What a fine book might be written containing the story of my sorrows!" said she to herself; "but it has been done. Sappho lived before me. Sappho was young! A touching and lovely heroine indeed is a woman of forty! Smoke your hookah, my poor Camille, you have not even the privilege of making a poem out of your woes; this crowns them all!"

She did not go to bed till daybreak, mingling tears, spasms of rage, and magnanimous resolutions in the long meditation wherein she sometimes considered the mysteries of the Catholic religion, of which she had never thought in the course of her reckless life as an artist and an unbelieving writer.

Next day, Calyste, advised by his mother to act exactly on Camille's instructions, came at noon and stole mysteriously up to Mademoiselle des Touches' room, where he found plenty of books. Félicité sat in an armchair by the window, smoking, and gazing alternately at the wild marsh landscape, at the sea, and at Calyste, with whom she exchanged a few words concerning Béatrix. At a certain moment, seeing the Marquise walking in the garden, she went to the window to unfasten the curtains, so that her friend should see her, and drew them to shut out the light, leaving only a strip that fell on Calyste's book.

"I shall ask you to stay to dinner this evening, my child," said she, tumbling his hair, "and you must refuse, looking at Béatrix; you will have no difficulty in making

her understand how deeply you regret being unable to remain here."

At about four o'clock Camille left him and went to play the dreadful farce of her false happiness to the Marquise, whom she brought back to the drawing-room. Calyste then came out of the adjoining room; at that moment he felt the shame of his position. The look he gave Béatrix, though watched for by Félicité, was even more expressive than she had expected. Béatrix was beautifully dressed.

"How elegant you are, my sweetheart!" said Camille, when Calyste had left.

These manœuvres went on for six days; they were seconded, without Calyste's knowledge, by the most ingenious conversations between Camille and her friend. There was between the two women a duel without truce, in which the weapons were cunning, feints, generosity, false confessions, astute confidences, in which one hid her love and the other stripped hers bare, while nevertheless the iron sharpness, red hot with Camille's treacherous words, pierced her friend's heart to the core, implanting some of those evil feelings which good women find it so hard to suppress. Béatrix in the end took offence at the suspicions betrayed by Camille; she thought them dishonoring to both alike; she was delighted to discover in the great authoress the weakness of her sex, and longed for the pleasure of showing her where her superiority ended, how she might be humiliated.

"Well, my dear, what are you going to tell him to-day?" she asked, with a spiteful glance at her friend, when the imaginary lover asked leave to remain. "On Monday we had something to talk over; on Tuesday you had too poor a dinner; on Wednesday you were afraid of annoying the Baroness; on Thursday we were going out together; yesterday you bid him good-by as soon as he opened his mouth. Now, I want him to stay to-day, poor boy!"

"Already, my dear!" said Camille, with biting irony.

Béatrix colored.

"Then stay, Monsieur du Guénic," said Mademoiselle des Touches, assuming a queenly air, as though she were nettled.

Béatrix turned cold and hard; she was crushing, satirical, and intolerable to Calyste, whom Félicité sent off to play *mouche* with Mademoiselle de Kergarouet.

"That girl is not dangerous!" said Béatrix, smiling.

Young men in love are like starving people, the cook's preparations do not satisfy them; they think too much of the end to understand the means. As he returned from les Touches to Guérande, Calyste's mind was full of Béatrix; he did not know what deep feminine skill Félicité was employing to promote his interests—to use a cant phrase. In the course of this week the Marquise had written but one letter to Conti, a symptom of indifference which had not escaped Camille.

Calyste's whole life was concentrated in the short moments when he saw Béatrix; this drop of water, far from quenching his thirst, only increased it. The magic words, "You shall be loved," spoken by Camille and indorsed by his mother, was the talisman by which he checked the fire of his passion. He tried to kill time; he could not sleep, and cheated his sleeplessness by reading, bringing home a barrow-load of books every evening, as Mariotte expressed it. His aunt cursed Mademoiselle des Touches; but the Baroness, who had often gone up to her son's room on seeing a light there, knew the secret of this wakefulness. Though Fanny had never got beyond her timidity as an ignorant girl, and love's books had remained closed to her, her motherly tenderness guided her to certain notions; still, the abysses of the sentiment were dark to her and hidden by clouds, and she was very much alarmed at the state in which she saw her son, terrifying herself over the one absorbing and incomprehensible desire that was consuming him.

Calyste had, in fact, but one idea; the image of Béatrix

was always before him. During the evening, over the cards, his absence of mind was like his father's slumbers. Finding him so unlike what he had been when he had believed himself in love with Camille, his mother recognized with a sort of terror the symptoms of a genuine passion, a thing altogether unknown in the old family home. Feverish irritability and constant dreaming made Calyste stupid. He would often sit for hours gazing at one figure in the tapestry. That morning she had advised him to go no more to les Touches, but to give up these two women.

"Not go to les Touches!" cried he.

"Nay, go, my dear, go; do not be angry, my darling," replied she, kissing his eyes, which had flashed flame at her.

In this state Calyste was within an ace of losing the fruits of Camille's skilled manœuvres by the Breton impetuosity of his love, which he could no longer master. In spite of his promises to Félicité, he vowed that he would see and speak to Béatrix. He wanted to read her eyes, to drown his gaze in their depths, to study the little details of her dress, to breathe its fragrance, to hear the music of her voice, follow the elegant deliberateness of her movements, embrace her figure in a glance—to contemplate her, in short, as a great general studies the field on which a decisive battle is to be fought. He wanted her, as lovers want; he was the prey of such desire as closed his ears, dulled his intellect, and threw him into a morbid condition, in which he no longer saw obstacles or distance, and was not even conscious of his body.

It struck him that he might go to les Touches before the hour agreed upon, hoping to find Béatrix in the garden. He knew that she walked there while waiting for breakfast. Mademoiselle des Touches and her friend had been in the morning to see the salt-marshes, and the basin with its shore of fine sand, into which the sea oozes, looking like a lake in the midst of the sand-hills; they had come home, and were talking as they wandered about the yellow gravel paths in the garden.

"If this landscape interests you," said Camille, "you

should go to le Croisic with Calyste. There are some very fine rocks there, cascades of granite, little bays with natural basins, wonders of capricious variety, and the sea-shore with thousands of fragments of marble, a whole world of amusement. You will see women *making wood*, that is to say, plastering masses of cow-dung against the wall to dry, and then piling them to keep, like peat in Paris; then in the winter they warm themselves by that fuel."

"And you will trust Calyste?" said the Marquise, laughing, in a tone which plainly showed that Camille, by sulking with Béatrix the night before, had obliged her to think of Calyste.

"Oh, my dear, when you know the angelic soul of a boy like him you will understand me. In him beauty is as nothing, you must know that pure heart, that guilelessness that is amazed at every step taken in the realm of love. What faith! what candor! what grace! The ancients had good reason to worship Beauty as holy.

"Some traveller, I forget who, tells us that horses in a state of freedom take the handsomest of them to be their leader. Beauty, my dear, is the genius of matter; it is the hall-mark set by Nature on her most perfect creations; it is the truest symbol, as it is the greatest chance. Did any one ever imagine a deformed angel? Do not they combine grace and strength? What has kept us standing for hours together before certain pictures in Italy, in which genius has striven for years to realize one of these caprices of nature? Come, with your hand on your conscience, was it not the ideal of beauty which we combined in our minds with moral grandeur? Well, and Calyste is one of those dreams made real; he has the courage of the lion, who remains quiet without suspecting his sovereignty. When he feels at his ease he is brilliant; I like his girlish diffidence. In his heart, my soul is refreshed after all the corruption, the ideas of science, literature, the world, politics—all the futile accessories under which we stifle happiness. I am now what I never was before —I am a child! I am sure of him, but I like to pretend

jealousy; it makes him happy. Besides, it is part of my secret."

Béatrix walked on, silent and pensive; Camille was enduring unspoken martyrdom, and flashing side glances at her that looked like flames.

"Ah, my dear, you—you are happy," said Béatrix, leaning her hand on Camille's arm like a woman weary of some covert resistance.

"Yes! very happy!" replied poor Félicité, with savage bitterness.

The women sank on to a bench, both exhausted. No creature of her sex was ever subjected to more elaborate seduction or more clear-sighted Machiavelism than Madame de Rochefide had been during the last week.

"But I—I who see Conti's infidelities, who swallow them, who—"

"And why do you not give him up?" said Camille, discerning a favorable moment for striking a decisive blow.

"Can I?"

"Oh! poor child—"

They both sat stupidly gazing at a clump of trees.

"I will go and hasten breakfast," said Camille, "this walk has given me an appetite."

"Our conversation has taken away mine," said Béatrix.

Béatrix, a white figure in a morning dress, stood out against the green masses of foliage. Calyste, who had stolen into the garden through the drawing-room, turned down a path, walking slowly to meet the Marquise by chance, as it were; and Béatrix could not help starting a little when she saw him.

"How did I displease you yesterday, Madame?" asked Calyste, after a few commonplace remarks had been exchanged.

"Why, you neither please me nor displease me," said she gently.

Her tone, her manner, her delightful grace encouraged Calyste.

'I am indifferent to you?" said he, in a voice husky with the tears that rose to his eyes.

"Must we not be indifferent to each other?" replied Béatrix. "Each of us has a sincere attachment—"

"Oh!" said Calyste eagerly, "I did love Camille; but I do not love her now."

"Then what do you do every day, all the morning long?" asked she, with a perfidious smile. "I cannot suppose that, in spite of her passion for tobacco, Camille prefers her cigar to you; or that, in spite of your admiration for authoresses, you spend four hours in reading novels by women."

"Then you know?" said the innocent boy, his face flushed with the joy of gazing at his idol.

"Calyste!" cried Camille violently, as she appeared on the scene, seizing him by the arm and pulling him some steps; "Calyste, is this what you promised me?"

The Marquise heard this reproof, while Mademoiselle des Touches went off scolding, and leading away Calyste; she stood mystified by Calyste's avowal, and unable to understand it. Madame de Rochefide was not so clear-sighted as Claude Vignon. The truth of the terrible and sublime comedy performed by Camille is one of those parts of magnanimous infamy which a woman can conceive of only in the last extremity. It means a breaking heart, the end of her feelings as a woman, and the beginning of a sacrifice, which drags her down to hell or leads her to heaven.

During breakfast, to which Calyste was invited, Béatrix, whose feelings were lofty and proud, had already undergone a revulsion, stifling the germs of love that were sprouting in her heart. She was not hard or cold to Calyste, but her mild indifference wrung his heart. Félicité proposed that they should go on the next day but one to make an excursion through the strange tract of country lying between les Touches, le Croisic, and le Bourg de Batz. She begged Calyste to spend the morrow in finding a boat and some men, in case they should wish to go out by sea. She under-

took to supply provisions, horses, and everything necessary to spare them any fatigue in this party of pleasure.

Béatrix cut her short by saying that she would not take the risk of running about the country. Calyste's face, which had expressed lively delight, was suddenly clouded.

"Why, what are you afraid of, my dear?" said Camille.

"My position is too delicate to allow of my compromising, not my reputation, but my happiness," she said with meaning, and she looked at the lad. "You know how jealous Conti is; if he knew—"

"And who is to tell him?"

"Will he not come back to fetch me?"

At these words Calyste turned pale. Notwithstanding Félicité's arguments, and those of the young Breton, Madame de Rochefide was inexorable, and showed what Camille called her obstinacy. Calyste, in spite of the hopes Félicité gave him, left les Touches in one of those fits of lovers' distress of which the violence often rises to the pitch of madness.

On his return home, Calyste did not quit his room till dinner-time, and went back again soon after. At ten o'clock his mother became uneasy, and went up to him; she found him writing in the midst of a quantity of torn papers and rough copy. He was writing to Béatrix, for he distrusted Camille; the Marquise's manner during their interview in the garden had encouraged him strangely.

Never did a first love-letter spring in a burning fount from the soul, as might be supposed. In all youths as yet uncorrupted, such a letter is produced with a flow too hotly effervescent not to be the elixir of several letters begun, rejected, and rewritten.

Here is that sent by Calyste, which he read to his poor, astonished mother. To her, the old house was on fire; her son's love blazed up in it like the flare of a conflagration.

*Calyste to Béatrix*

"MADAME—I loved you when as yet you were but a dream to me; imagine the fervor assumed by my love when

I saw you. The dream was surpassed by the reality. My regret is that I have nothing to tell you that you do not know, when I say how beautiful you are; still, perhaps your beauty never gave rise to so many feelings in any one as in me. You are beautiful in so many ways; I have studied you so thoroughly by thinking of you day and night that I have penetrated the mystery of your personality, the secrets of your heart, and your misprized refinements. Have you ever been loved as you deserve?

"Let me tell you, then, that there is nothing in you which has not its interpretation in my heart: your pride answers to mine, the dignity of your looks, the grace of your mien, the elegance of your movements—everything in you is in harmony with the thoughts and wishes hidden in your secret soul; and it is because I can read them that I think myself worthy of you. If I had not become, within these few days, your second self, should I dare speak to you of myself? To read myself would be egotistic; it is you I speak of here, not Calyste.

"To write to you, Béatrix, I have set my twenty years aside; I have stolen a march on myself and aged my mind—or, perhaps, you have aged it by a week of the most horrible torments, caused, innocently indeed, by you. Do not take me for one of those commonplace lovers at whom you laugh with such good reason. What merit is there, indeed, in loving a young, beautiful, clever, noble woman! Alas, I cannot even dream of deserving you! What am I to you? A boy attracted by beauty and moral worth, as an insect is attracted by light. You cannot do anything else than trample on the flowers of my soul, yet all my happiness lies in seeing you spurn them underfoot. Absolute devotion, unlimited faith, the maddest passion—all these treasures of a true and loving heart are nothing; they help me to love, they cannot win love.

"Sometimes I wonder that such fervid fanaticism should fail to warm the idol; and when I meet your severe, cold eye, I feel myself turn to ice. Your disdain affects me then,

and not my adoration. Why? You cannot possibly hate me so much as I love you; so ought the weaker feeling to get the mastery over the stronger?

"I loved Félicité with all the strength of my heart; I forgot her in a day, in an instant, on seeing you. She was a mistake, you are the truth. You, without knowing it, have wrecked my happiness, and you owe me nothing in exchange. I loved Camille without hope, and you give me no hopes; nothing is changed but the divinity. I was a Pagan, I am a Christian; that is all. Only, you have taught me to love—to be loved does not come till later. Camille says it is not love that loves only for a few days: the love that does not grow day by day is a contemptible passion; to continue growing, it must not foresee its end, and she could see the setting of our sun.

"On seeing you, I understood these sayings which I had struggled against with all my youth, all the rage of my desires, all the fierce despotism of my twenty years. Then our great and sublime Camille mingled her tears with mine. So I may love you on earth and in heaven, as we love God. If you loved me, you could not meet me with the reasoning by which Camille annihilated my efforts. We are both young, we can fly on the same wings, under the same sky, and never fear the storm that threatened that eagle.

"But what am I saying? I am carried far beyond the modesty of my hopes. You will cease to believe in the submission, the patience, the mute worship which I implore you not to wound needlessly. I know, Béatrix, that you cannot love me without falling in your own esteem. And I ask for no return.

"Camille said once that there was an innate fatality in names, as in her own. I felt this fatality in yours when on the pier at Guérande it struck my eyes on the seashore: you will come into my life as Beatrice came into Dante's. My heart will be the pedestal for a white statue—vindictive, jealous and tyrannous. You are prohibited from loving me; you would endure a thousand deaths; you would be de-

ceived, mortified, unhappy. There is in you a diabolical pride which binds you to the pillar you have laid hold on; you will perish while shaking the temple like Samson. I did not discover all these things; my love is too blind; Camille told me. Here it is not my mind that speaks, but hers; I have no wits when you are in question, a tide of blood comes up from my heart, darkening my intellect with its waves, depriving me of my powers, paralyzing my tongue, making my knees quake and bend. I can only adore you, whatever you do. Camille calls your firmness obstinacy; I defend you; I believe it to be dictated by virtue. You are only all the more beautiful in my eyes. I know my fate; the pride of Brittany is a match for the woman who has made a virtue of hers.

"And so, dear Béatrix, be kind and comforting to me. When the victims were chosen, they were crowned with flowers; you owe me the garlands of compassion, and music for the sacrifice. Am I not the proof of your greatness, and will you not rise to the height of my love, scorned in spite of its sincerity, in spite of its undying fires?

"Ask Camille what my conduct has been since the day when she told me that she loved Claude Vignon. I was mute; I suffered in silence. Well, then, for you I could find yet greater strength, if you do not drive me to desperation, if you understand my heroism. One word of praise from you would enable me to bear the torments of martyrdom. If you persist in this cold silence, this deadly disdain, you will make me believe that I am to be feared. Oh, be to me all you can be—charming, gay, witty, affectionate. Talk to me of Gennaro as Camille did of Claude. I have no genius but that of love; there is nothing formidable in me, and in your presence I will behave as though I did not love you.

"Can you reject the prayer of such humble devotion, of a hapless youth who only asks that his sun should give him light and warm him? The man you love will always see you; poor Calyste has but a few days before him, you will

soon be rid of him. So I may go to les Touches again to-morrow, may I not? You will not refuse my arm to guide you round the shores of le Croisic and le Bourg de Batz?—If you should not come, that will be an answer, and understood by Calyste."

There were four pages more of close small writing, in which Calyste explained the terrible threat contained in these last words, by relating the story of his boyhood and life; but he told it in exclamatory phrases; there were many of those dots and dashes lavishly scattered through modern literature in perilous passages, like planks laid before the reader to enable him to cross the gulf. This artless picture would be a repetition of our narrative; if it did not touch Madame de Rochefide, it could scarcely interest those who seek strong sensations; but it made his mother weep and say: "Then you have not been happy?"

This terrible poem of feeling that had come like a storm on Calyste's heart, and was to be sent like a whirlwind to another, frightened the Baroness; it was the first time in her life that she had ever read a love-letter.

Calyste was standing up: there was one great difficulty; he did not know how to send his letter.

The Chevalier du Halga was still in the sitting-room, where they were playing off the last pool of a very lively *mouche*. Charlotte de Kergarouet, in despair at Calyste's indifference, was trying to charm the old people in the hope of thus securing her marriage. Calyste followed his mother, and came back into the room with the letter in his breast-pocket—it seemed to scorch his heart; he wandered about and up and down the room like a moth that had come in by mistake. At last the mother and son got Monsieur du Halga into the hall, whence they dismissed Mariotte and Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel's little servant.

"What do they want of the Chevalier?" said old Zéphirine to the other old maid.

"Calyste seems to me to be out of his mind," replied she.

"He pays no more heed to Charlotte than if she were one of the marsh-girls."

The Baroness had very shrewdly supposed that the Chevalier du Halga must, somewhere about the year 1780, have sailed the seas of gallant adventure, and she advised Calyste to consult him.

"What is the best way to send a letter secretly to a lady?" said Calyste to the Chevalier in a whisper.

"You can give the note to her lady's-maid, with a few louis in her hand, for sooner or later the maid is in the secret, and it is best to let her know it from the first," replied the Chevalier, who could not suppress a smile; "but it is better to deliver it yourself."

"A few louis!" exclaimed the Baroness.

Calyste went away and fetched his hat; then he flew off to les Touches, and walked like an apparition into the little drawing-room, where he heard Béatrix and Camille talking. They were sitting on the divan, and seemed on the best possible terms. Calyste, with the sudden wit that love imparts, flung himself heedlessly on the divan by the Marquise, seized her hand, and pressed the letter into it, so that Félicité, watchful as she might be, could not see it done. Calyste's heart fluttered with an emotion that was at once acute and delightful, as he felt Béatrix's hand grasp his, and without even interrupting her sentence or seeming surprised, she slipped the letter into her gloves.

"You fling yourself on a woman as if she were a divan," said she with a laugh.

"He has not, however, adopted the doctrine of the Turks!" said Félicité, who could not forbear from this retort.

Calyste rose, took Camille's hand and kissed it; then he went to the piano and made every note sound in a long scale by running one finger over them. This glad excitement puzzled Camille, who told him to come to speak to her.

"What is it?" she asked in his ear.

"Nothing," said he.

"There is something between them," said Mademoiselle des Touches to herself.

The Marquise was impenetrable. Camille tried to make Calyste talk, hoping that he might betray himself; but the boy made an excuse of the uneasiness his mother would feel, and he left les Touches at eleven o'clock, not without having stood the fire of a piercing look from Camille, to whom he had never before made this excuse.

After the agitations of a night filled with Béatrix, after he had been into the town twenty times in the course of the morning, in the hope of meeting the answer which did not come, the Marquise's maid came to the Hotel du Guénic, and gave the following reply to Calyste, who went off to read it in the arbor at the end of the garden:

*Beatrix to Calyste*

"You are a noble boy, but you are a boy. You owe yourself to Camille, who worships you. You will not find in me either the perfections that distinguish her or the happiness she lavishes on you. Whatever you may think, it is she who is young and I who am old; her heart is full of treasures, and mine is empty. She is devoted to you in a way you do not appreciate enough; she has no selfishness, and lives wholly in you. I should be full of doubts; I should drag you into a life that is weariful, ignoble, and spoiled by my own fault. Camille is free, she comes and goes at her will; I am a slave. In short, you forget that I love and am loved. The position in which I find myself ought to protect me against any homage. To love me, to tell me that you love me, is an insult. Would not a second lapse place me on the level of the most abandoned women?

"You, who are young and full of delicate feeling, how can you compel me to say things which the heart cannot utter without being torn?

"I preferred the scandal of an irreparable disaster to the shame of perpetual deceit, my own ruin to the loss of my self-respect. In the eyes of many people whose esteem I

value, I stand still high; if I should change, I should fall some steps lower. The world is still merciful to women whose constancy cloaks their illicit happiness, but it is pitiless to a vicious habit.

"I feel neither scorn nor anger; I am answering you with frank simplicity. You are young, you know nothing of the world, you are carried away by imagination, and, like all men of pure life, you are incapable of the reflections induced by disaster. I will go further: If I should be of all women the most mortified; if I had horrible misery to hide; if I were deceived and deserted at last—and, thank God, nothing of that is possible—if, I say, by the vengeance of Heaven these things were, no one in the world would ever see me again. And then I could find it in me to kill the man who should speak to me of love, if a man could still find me where I should be. There you have the whole of my mind.

"Perhaps I have to thank you for having written to me. After your letter, and especially after my reply, I may be quite at my ease with you at les Touches, follow the bent of my humor, and be what you ask me to be. I say nothing of the bitter ridicule I should incur if my eyes should cease to express the sentiments of which you complain. To rob Camille a second time would be an evidence of weakness to which no woman could twice resign herself. If I loved you madly, if I were blind, if I were forgetful of everything else, I should always see Camille. Her love for you is a barrier too high to be crossed by any force, even with the wings of an angel; only demons would not recoil from such base treachery.

"In this, my child, lies a world of reasons which noble and refined women keep to themselves, of which you men know nothing, even when a man is so like a woman as you are at this moment.

"Finally, you have a mother who has shown you what a woman's life ought to be; pure and spotless, she has fulfilled her fate nobly; all I know of her has filled my eyes with tears of envy which have risen from the depths of my heart.

I might have been like her! Calyste, this is what your wife ought to be; this is what her life ought to be.

"I will not again cast you back maliciously, as I have done, on little Charlotte, who would bore you from the first, but on some exquisite girl who is worthy of you. If I gave myself to you, I should spoil your life. Either you would fail in faithfulness, in constancy, or you would resolve to devote your life to me: I will be honest—I should take it; I should carry you off I know not whither, far from the world; I should make you very unhappy; I am jealous. I see monsters in a drop of water; I am in despair over odious trifles which many women put up with; there are even inexorable thoughts, originating in myself, not caused by you, which would wound me to death. When a man is not as respectful and as delicate in the tenth year of his happiness as he was on the eve of the day when he was a beggar for a favor, he seems to me a wretch, and degrades me in my own eyes. Such a lover no longer believes in the Amadis and Cyrus of my dreams. In our day love is purely mythical; and in you I find no more than the fatuity of a desire which knows not its end. I am not forty; I cannot yet bring my pride to bend to the authority of experience; I know not the love that could make me humble; in fact, I am a woman whose nature is still too youthful not to be detestable. I cannot answer for my moods; all my graciousness is on the surface. Perhaps I have not suffered enough yet to have acquired the indulgent ways, the perfect tenderness that we owe to cruel deceptions. Happiness has its impertinence, and I am very impertinent. Camille will always be your devoted slave, I should be an unreasonable tyrant.

"Indeed, is not Camille set by your side by your good angel, to guard you till you have reached the moment when you must start on the life that is in store for you, and which you must not fail in? I know Félicité! Her tenderness is inexhaustible; she may perhaps lack some of the graces of her sex, but she shows that vivifying strength, that genius for constancy, and that lofty courage which make everything

acceptable. She will see you marry while suffering tortures; she will find you a free Béatrix, if Béatrix fulfils your ideal of woman and answers to your dreams; she will smooth out all the difficulties in your future life. The sale of a single acre of her land in Paris will redeem your estates in Brittany; she will make you her heir—has she not already adopted you as a son? And I, alas! What can I do for your happiness? Nothing.

"Do not be false to an immeasurable affection which has made up its mind to the duties of motherliness. To me she seems most happy—this Camille! The admiration you feel for poor Béatrix is such a peccadillo as women of Camille's age view with the greatest indulgence. When they are sure of being loved they will allow constancy a little infidelity; nay, one of their keenest pleasures is to triumph over the youth of their rivals.

"Camille is superior to other women, all this does not bear upon her; I only say it to reassure your conscience. I have studied Camille well; she is in my eyes one of the grandest figures of our time. She is both clever and kind, two qualities rarely united in a woman; she is generous and simple, two more great qualities seldom found together. I have seen trustworthy treasures in the depth of her heart; it would seem as though Dante had written for her in the 'Paradiso' the beautiful lines on eternal happiness which she was interpreting to you the other evening, ending with *Senza brama sicura richezza.*

"She has talked to me of her fate in life, told me all her experience, and proved to me that love, the object of our desires and dreams, had always evaded her; I replied that she seemed to me a proof of that difficulty of matching anything sublime, which accounts for much unhappiness. Yours is one of the angelic souls whose sister-soul it seems impossible to find. This misfortune, dear child, is what Camille will spare you; even if she should die for it, she will find you a being with whom you may live happy as a husband.

"I offer you a friend's hand, and trust, not to your heart,

but to your sense, to find that we are henceforth to each other a brother and sister, and to terminate our correspondence, which, between les Touches and Guérande, is odd, to say the least of it. BÉATRIX DE CASTERAN."

The Baroness, in the highest degree excited by the details and progress of her son's love affairs with the beautiful Rochefide, could not sit still in the room, where she was working at her cross-stitch, looking up at every stitch to watch Calyste; she rose from her chair and came up to him with a mixture of diffidence and boldness. The mother had all the graces of a courtesan about to ask a favor.

"Well?" said she, trembling, but not actually asking to see the letter.

Calyste showed it her in his hand, and read it aloud to her. The two noble souls, so simple and ingenuous, discovered in this astute and perfidious reply none of the treachery and snares infused into it by the Marquise.

"She is a noble and high-minded woman!" said the Baroness, whose eyes glistened with moisture. "I will pray to God for her. I never believed that a mother could desert her husband and child and preserve so much virtue. She deserves to be forgiven."

"Am I not right to worship her?" cried Calyste.

"But whither will this love lead you?" said his mother. "Oh! my child, how dangerous are these women of noble sentiments! Bad women are less to be feared.—Marry Charlotte de Kergarouet, and release two-thirds of the family estates. Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel can achieve this great end by selling a few farms, and the good soul will devote herself to improving the property. You may leave your children a noble name, a fine fortune—"

"What, forget Béatrix?" said Calyste in a hollow voice, his eyes fixed on the floor.

He left his mother, and went up to his room to reply to this letter.

Madame du Guénic had Madame de Rochefide's words

stamped on her heart: she wanted to know on what Calyste founded his hopes. At about this hour the Chevalier would be exercising his dog on the Mall; the Baroness, sure of finding him there, put on a bonnet and shawl and went out. It was so extraordinary an event to see Madame du Guénic out, excepting at church, or in one of the two pretty alleys that were frequented on fête-days, when she would accompany her husband and Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel, that, within two hours, every one was saying to every one else, "Madame du Guénic was out to-day; did you see her?" Thus before long the news came to Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel's ears, and she said to her niece: "Something very strange is happening at the du Guénics'."

"Calyste is madly in love with the beautiful Marquise de Rochefide," said Charlotte. "I should do better to leave Guérande and go back to Nantes."

At this moment the Chevalier du Halga, surprised at being sought out by the Baroness, had released Thisbe from her cord, recognizing the impossibility of attending to two ladies at once.

"Chevalier, you have had some experience in love affairs?" said the Baroness.

Captain du Halga drew himself up with not a little of the airs of a coxcomb. Madame du Guénic, without naming her son or the Marquise, told him the contents of the love letter, asking him what could be the meaning of such an answer. The Chevalier stood with his nose in the air caressing his chin; he listened with little grimaces; and at last he looked keenly at the Baroness.

"When a thoroughbred horse means to leap a fence, it goes up to it first to smell it and examine it," he said. "Calyste will be the happiest young rogue—"

"Hush!" said the Baroness.

"I am dumb. In old times that was my only point," said the old man. "It is fine weather," he went on after a pause, "the wind is northeasterly. By Heaven! how the 'Belle-Poule' danced before that wind on the day— But,"

he went on, interrupting himself, "I have a singing in my ears, and pains in the false-ribs; the weather will change.—You know that the fight of the 'Belle-Poule' was so famous that ladies wore caps à la Belle-Poule. Madame de Kergarouet was the first to appear at the Opera in such a headdress. 'You are dressed for conquest,' I said to her. The words were repeated in every box."

The Baroness listened politely to the old man, who, faithful to the laws of old-world etiquette, escorted her back to the little street, neglecting Thisbe. He let out the secret of Thisbe's birth. She was the granddaughter of that sweet Thisbe that had belonged to Madame la Comtesse de Kergarouet, the Admiral's first wife. This Thisbe the third was eighteen years old.

The Baroness ran lightly up to Calyste's room, as gleeful as if she were in love herself. Calyste was not there, but Fanny saw a letter on the table addressed to Madame de Rochefide, folded, but not sealed. Irresistible curiosity prompted the anxious mother to read her son's answer. The indiscretion was cruelly punished; she felt horrible anguish when she saw the precipice toward which love was driving Calyste.

*Calyste to Béatrix*

"What do I care for the family of du Guénic in such times as we live in, dearest Béatrix! My name is Béatrix, the happiness of Béatrix is my happiness, her life is my life, and all my fortune is in her heart. Our lands have been in pledge these two hundred years, and may remain so for two hundred more; our farmers have them, no one can take them away. To see and love you! That is my religion.

"Marry! The idea has made me heartsick. Are there two such as Béatrix? I will marry no one but you; I will wait twenty years if I must; I am young, and you will always be beautiful. My mother is a saint, and it is not for me to judge her. She never loved! I know now how much she has lost, and what sacrifices she has made. You, Béatrix,

have taught me to love my mother better; she dwells in my heart with you—there will never be any one else; she is your only rival. Is not this as much as to say that no one shares your throne? So your reassuring letter has no effect on my mind.

"As to Camille, you have only to give me a hint, and I will beg her to tell you herself that I do not love her; she is the mother of my intelligence; nothing more, nothing less. As soon as I saw you, she became a sister to me, my friend —my man friend—what you will; but we have no claims on each other beyond those of friendship. I thought she was a woman till the moment when I first saw you. But you show me that Camille is a man; she swims, hunts, rides; she smokes and drinks; she writes, she can analyze a book or a heart; she has not the smallest weakness; she walks on in her strength; she has not your free grace, your step like the flight of a bird, your voice—the voice of love—your arch looks, your gracious demeanor. She is Camille Maupin, and nothing else; she has nothing of the woman about her, and you have everything that I love in woman; I felt from the day when I first saw you that you were mine.

"You will laugh at this feeling, but it has gone on increasing; it strikes me as monstrous that we should be divided; you are my soul, my life, and I cannot live where you are not. Let me love you! We will fly, we will go far, far from the world, into some country where you will know nobody, and where you will have no one but me and God in your heart. My mother, who loves you, will come some day to live with us. Ireland has many country houses, and my mother's family will surely lend us one. Great God! Let us be off! A boat, some sailors, and we shall be there before any one can guess whither we have fled from the world you dread so greatly.

"You have never been loved; I feel it as I reread your letter, and I fancy I can perceive that if none of the reasons of which you speak existed you would allow yourself to be loved by me. Béatrix, a holy love will wipe out the past.

"Is it possible in your presence to think of anything but you? Oh! I love you so much that I could wish you a thousand times disgraced, so as to prove to you the power of my love by adoring you as if you were the holiest of creatures. You call my love for you an insult. Oh, Béatrix, you do not think that! The love of a 'noble child'—you call me so—would do honor to a queen.

"So to-morrow we will wander loverlike along by the rocks and the sea, and you shall tread the sands of old Brittany and consecrate them anew for me. Give me that day of joy, and the transient alms—leaving perhaps, alas! no trace on your memory—will be a perennial treasure to Calyste—"

The Baroness dropped the letter unfinished; she knelt on a chair and put up a silent prayer to God, imploring Him to preserve her son's wits, to deliver him from madness and error, and snatch him back from the ways in which she saw him rushing.

"What are you doing, mother?" said Calyste's voice.

"Praying for you," she replied, looking at him with eyes full of tears. "I have been so wrong as to read this letter.—My Calyste is gone mad."

"It is the sweetest form of madness," said the youth, kissing his mother.

"I should like to see this woman, my child."

"Well, mamma, we shall take a boat to-morrow to cross over to le Croisic; come to the jetty."

He sealed his letter and went off to les Touches. The thing which above all others appalled the Baroness was to see that, by sheer force of instinct, feeling could acquire the insight of consummate experience. Calyste had written to Béatrix as he might have done under the guidance of Monsieur du Halga.

One of the greatest joys, perhaps, that a small mind can know is that of duping a great soul and catching it in a snare. Béatrix knew herself to be very inferior to Camille Maupin.

This inferiority was not merely in the sum-total of intellectual qualities known as talent, but also in those qualities of the heart that are called passion. At the moment when Calyste arrived at les Touches, with the impetuous haste of first love borne on the pinions of hope, the Marquise was conscious of keen satisfaction in knowing herself to be loved by this charming youth. She did not go so far as to wish to be his accomplice in this feeling; she made it a point of heroism to repress this *capriccio*, as the Italians say, and fancied she would thus be on a par with her friend; she was happy to be able to make her some sacrifice. In short, the vanities peculiar to a Frenchwoman, which constitute the famous *coquetterie* whence she derives her superiority, were in her flattered and amply satisfied: she was tempted by the utmost seduction, and she resisted it; her virtues sang a sweet concert of praise in her ear.

The two women, apparently indolent, were lounging on the divan in that little drawing-room so full of harmony, in the midst of a world of flowers, with the window open, for the north winds had ceased to blow. A melting southerly breeze dimpled the salt-water lake that they could see in front of them, and the sun scorched the golden sands. Their spirits were as deeply tossed as Nature lay calm, and not less burning. Camille, broken on the wheel of the machinery she was working, was obliged to keep a guard over herself, the friendly foe she had admitted into her cage was so prodigiously keen; not to betray her secret she gave herself up to observing the secrets of nature; she cheated her pain by seeking a meaning in the motions of the spheres, and found God in the sublime solitude of the sky.

When once an infidel acknowledges God, he throws himself headlong into Catholicism, which, viewed as a system, is perfect.

That morning Camille had shown the Marquise a face still radiant with the light of her research, carried on during a night spent in lamentation. Calyste was always before her like a heavenly vision. She regarded this beautiful youth, to

whom she devoted herself, as her guardian angel. Was it not he who was leading her to the supernal regions where sufferings have an end under the weight of incomprehensible immensity? Still, Camille was made uneasy by Béatrix's triumphant looks. One woman does not gain such an advantage over another without allowing it to be guessed, while justifying herself for having taken it. Nothing could be stranger than this covert moral struggle between the two friends, each hiding a secret from the other, and each believing herself to be the creditor for unspoken sacrifices.

Calyste arrived holding his letter under his glove, ready to slip it into Béatrix's hand. Camille, who had not failed to mark the change in her guest's manner, affected not to look at her, but studied her in a mirror just when Calyste made his entrance. That is the sunken rock for every woman. The cleverest and the most stupid, the most frank and the most astute, are not then mistress of their secret; at that moment it blazes out to another woman's eyes. Too much reserve or too much freedom, an open and a beaming glance, or a mysterious droop of the eyelids—everything then reveals the feeling above all others difficult to conceal, for indifference is so absolutely cold that it can never be well acted. Women have the genius of shades of manner—they use them too often not to know them all—and on these occasions they take in a rival from head to foot at a glance; they see the slightest twitch of a foot under a petticoat, the most imperceptible start in the figure, and know the meaning of what to a man seems to have none. Two women watching one another play one of the finest comedies to be seen.

"Calyste has committed some folly," thought Camille, observing in both of them the indefinable look of persons who understand each other.

There was no formality or affected indifference in the Marquise now; she looked at Calyste as if he belonged to her. Calyste explained matters; he reddened like a guilty creature, like a happy lover. He had just settled everything for their excursion on the morrow.

"Then you are really going, my dear?" said Camille.

"Yes," said Béatrix.

"How did you know that?" said Mademoiselle des Touches to Calyste.

"I have come to ask," he replied, at a glance shot at him by Madame de Rochefide, who did not wish her friend to have any suspicion of their correspondence.

"They have already come to an understanding," said Camille to herself, catching this look by a side-glance from the corner of her eye. "It is all over; there is nothing left to me but to disappear."

And under the pressure of this thought, a deathlike change passed over her face that gave Béatrix a chill.

"What is the matter, dear?" said she.

"Nothing.—Then, Calyste, will you send on my horses and yours so that we may find them ready on the other side of le Croisic and ride back through le Bourg de Batz. We will breakfast at le Croisic and dine here. You will undertake to find boatmen. We will start at half-past eight in the morning.—Such fine scenery!" she added to Béatrix. "You will see Cambremer, a man who is doing penance on a rock for having murdered his son. Oh! you are in a primitive land where men do not feel like the common herd. Calyste will tell you the story."

She went into her room; she was stifling. Calyste delivered his letter and followed Camille.

"Calyste, she loves you, I believe; but you are hiding something; you have certainly disobeyed my injunctions."

"She loves me!" said he, dropping into a chair.

Camille looked out at the door. Béatrix had vanished. This was strange. A woman does not fly from a room where the man is whom she loves and whom she is certain to see again, unless she has something better to do. Mademoiselle des Touches asked herself, "Can she have a letter from Calyste?" But she thought the innocent lad incapable of such audacity.

"If you have disobeyed me, all is lost by your own

fault," said she gravely. "Go and prepare for the joys of to-morrow."

She dismissed him with a gesture which Calyste could not rebel against. There are silent sorrows that are despotically eloquent. As he went to le Croisic to find the boatmen, Calyste had some qualms of fear. Camille's speech bore a stamp of doom that revealed the foresight of a mother.

Four hours later, when he returned, very tired, counting on dining at les Touches, he was met at the door by Camille's maid, who told him that her mistress and the Marquise could not see him this evening. Calyste was surprised, and wanted to question the maid, but she shut the door and vanished.

Six o'clock was striking by the clocks of Guérande. Calyste went home, asked for some dinner, and then played *mouche*, a prey to gloomy meditations. These alternations of joy and grief, the overthrow of his hopes following hard upon what seemed the certainty that he was loved, crushed the young soul that had been soaring heavenward to the sky, and had risen so high that the fall must be tremendous.

"What ails you, my Calyste?" his mother whispered to him.

"Nothing," said he, looking at her with eyes whence the light of his soul and the flame of love had died out.

It is not hope but despair that gives the measure of our ambitions. We give ourselves over in secret to the beautiful poems of hope, while grief shows itself unveiled.

"Calyste, you are not at all nice," said Charlotte, after vainly wasting on him those little provincial teasing ways which always degenerate into annoyance.

"I am tired," he said, rising and bidding the party good-night.

"Calyste is much altered," said Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel.

"*We* haven't fine gowns covered with lace; we don't flourish our sleeves like this; we don't sit so, or know how to look on one side and wriggle our heads," said Charlotte,

imitating and caricaturing the Marquise's airs and attitude and looks. "We haven't a voice with a squeak in the head, or a little interesting cough, *heugh! heugh!* like the sigh of a ghost; we are so unfortunate as to have robust health and be fond of our friends without any nonsense; when we look at them we do not seem to be stabbing them with a dart, or examining them with a hypocritical glance. We don't know how to droop our heads like a weeping willow, and appear quite affable merely by raising it, so!"

Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel could not help laughing at her niece's performance; but neither the Chevalier nor the Baron understood this satire of the country on Paris.

"But the Marquise de Rochefide is very handsome," said the old lady.

"My dear," said the Baroness to her husband, "I happen to know that she is going to-morrow to le Croisic; we will walk down there. I should very much like to meet her."

While Calyste was racking his brain to divine why the door of les Touches should have been closed in his face, a scene was taking place between the two friends which was to have its effect on the events of the morrow. Calyste's letter had given birth to unknown emotions in Madame de Rochefide's heart. A woman is not often the object of a passion so youthful, so guileless, so sincere and absolute as was this boy's. Béatrix had loved more than she had been loved. After being a slave she felt an unaccountable longing to be the tyrant in her turn.

In the midst of her joy, as she read and re-read Calyste's letter, a cruel thought pierced her like a stab. What had Calyste and Camille been about together since Claude Vignon's departure? If Calyste did not love Camille, and Camille knew it, what did they do in those long mornings? The memory of her brain insidiously compared this remark with all Camille had said. It was as though a smiling devil held up before her, as in a mirror, the portrait of her heroic friend, with certain looks, certain gestures, which finally enlightened Béatrix. Far from being Félicité's equal, she was

crushed by her; far from deceiving her, it was she who was deceived; she herself was but a toy that Camille wanted to give the child she loved with an extraordinary and never vulgar passion.

To a woman like Béatrix this discovery was a thunderbolt. She recalled every detail of the past week. In an instant Camille's part and her own lay before her in their fullest development; she saw herself strangely abased. In the rush of her jealous hatred she fancied she detected in Camille some plot of revenge on Conti. All the events of the past two years had perhaps led up to these two weeks. Once started on the downward slope of suspicions, hypotheses, and anger, Béatrix did not check herself; she walked up and down her rooms, spurred by impulses of passion, or, sitting down now and again, tried to make a plan; still, until the dinner-hour she remained a prey to indecision, and only went down when dinner was served without changing her dress.

On seeing her rival come in, Camille guessed everything. Béatrix, in morning dress, had a cold look and an expression of reserve, which to an observer so keen as Camille betrayed the animosity of imbittered feelings. Camille immediately left the room and gave the order that had so greatly astonished Calyste; she thought that if the guileless lad, with his insane adoration, came into the middle of the quarrel he might never see Béatrix again, and compromise the future of his passion by some foolish bluntness. She meant to fight out this duel of dupery without any witness. Béatrix, with no one to uphold her, must certainly yield. Camille knew how shallow her soul was, and how mean her pride, to which she had justly given the name of obstinacy.

The dinner was gloomy. Both the women had too much spirit and good taste to have any explanation before the servants, or when they might listen at the doors. Camille was gentle and kind; she felt herself so much the superior! The Marquise was hard and biting; she knew she was being fooled like a child. There was, all through dinner,

a warfare of looks, shrugs, half-spoken words, to which the servants could have no clew, but which gave warning of a terrible storm. When they were going upstairs again, Camille mischievously offered Béatrix her arm; the Marquise affected not to see, and rushed forward alone. As soon as coffee was served, Mademoiselle des Touches said to her servant, "You can go," and this was the signal for battle.

"The romances you act out, my dear, are rather more dangerous than those you write," said the Marquise.

"They have, however, one great merit," said Camille, taking a cigarette.

"What is that?" asked Béatrix.

"They are unpublished, my angel."

"Will that in which you have plunged me make a book?"

"I have no genius for the task of Œdipus; you have the wit and beauty of the sphinx, I know, but do not ask me any riddles; speak out, my dear Béatrix."

"When in order to make men happy, to amuse them, please them, dispel their annoyances, we appeal to the devil to help us—"

"The men blame us afterward for our endeavor, and believe it to be dictated by a spirit of depravity," said Camille, taking her cigarette from her lips to interrupt her friend.

"They forget the love which carried us away, and which justified our excesses—for whither may we not be carried? —But they are only playing out their part as men, they are ungrateful and unjust," said Béatrix. "Women know each other; they know how truly lofty and noble their attitude is under all circumstances—nay, I may say how virtuous.

"Still, Camille, I have begun to perceive the truth of certain remarks I have heard you complain of. Yes, my dear, there is something of the man in you; you behave like men; nothing checks you; and if you have not all their merits, your mind conducts itself like theirs, and you share their contempt for us women. I have no rea-

son to be pleased with you, my dear, and I am too frank to conceal the fact. Nobody, perhaps, will ever inflict so deep a wound on my heart as that I am now suffering from. Though you are not always a woman in love matters, you become one again in revenge. Only a woman of genius could have discovered the tenderest spot in our delicate sentiments—I am speaking of Calyste, and of the trickery, my dear, for that is the right word, that you have employed against me. How low you have fallen, you, Camille Maupin; and to what end?"

"Still and still more the sphinx," said Camille, smiling.

"You wanted to make me throw myself at Calyste's head; I am still too young for such doings. To me love is love, with its intolerable jealousy and despotic demands. I am not a writer; it is not possible to me to find ideas in feelings—"

"You think yourself capable of loving foolishly?" Camille asked her. "Be quite easy, you still have all your wits about you. You malign yourself, my dear; you are cold enough for your head always to remain supreme judge of the achievements of your heart."

This epigram brought the color to the Marquise's face; she shot a look full of hatred, an envenomed look, at Camille; and at once, without stopping to choose them, let fly all the sharpest arrows in her quiver. Camille, smoking her cigarettes, listened calmly to this furious attack, bristling with such virulent abuse that it is impossible to record it. Béatrix, provoked by her adversary's imperturbable manner, fell back on odious personalities and Mademoiselle des Touches' age.

"Is that all?" asked Camille, blowing a cloud of smoke. "Are you in love with Calyste?"

"Certainly not."

"So much the better," replied Camille. "I am, and far too much for my happiness. He has, no doubt, a fancy for you. You are the loveliest *blonde* in the world, and I am as brown as a mole; you are slim and slender, my figure is too

dignified. In short, you are young; that is the great fact, and you have not spared me. You have made an abuse of your advantages over me as a woman, neither more nor less than as a comic paper makes an abuse of humor. I have done all in my power to prevent what is now inevitable," and she raised her eyes to the ceiling. "However little I may seem to be a woman, I still have enough of the woman in me for a rival to need my help in order to triumph over me!" This cruel speech, uttered with an air of perfect innocence, went to the Marquise's heart. "You must think me a very idiotic person if you believe all that Calyste tries to make you believe about me. I am neither lofty nor mean; I am a woman, and very much a woman. Throw off you airs and give me your hand," said Camille, taking possession of Béatrix's hand. "You do not love Calyste, that is the truth—is it not? Then do not get in a rage! Be stern with him to-morrow, cold and hard, and he will end by submitting after the scolding I shall give him, for I have not exhausted the resources of our arsenal, and, after all, pleasure always gets the better of desire.

"But Calyste is a Breton. If he persists in paying you his addresses, tell me honestly, and you can go at once to a little country-house of mine at six leagues from Paris, where you will find every comfort, and where Conti can join you. If Calyste slanders me! Why, good heavens! The purest love lies six times a day; its illusions prove its strength."

There was a proud coldness in Camille's expression that made the Marquise uneasy and afraid. She did not know what answer to make.

Camille struck the final blow.

"I am more trusting and less bitter than you," she went on. "I do not imagine that you intended to hide under recrimination an attack which would imperil my life; you know me; I should not survive the loss of Calyste, and I must lose him sooner or later. But, indeed, Calyste loves me, and I know it."

"Here is his answer to a letter from me in which I wrote only of you," said Béatrix, holding out Calyste's letter.

Camille took it and read it. As she read her eyes filled with tears; she wept, as all women weep in acute suffering.

"Good God!" said she. "He loves her. Then I must die without ever having been understood or loved!"

She sat for some minutes with her head resting on her friend's shoulder; her pain was genuine; she felt in her own soul the same terrible blow that Madame du Guénic had received on reading this letter.

"Do you love him?" said she, sitting up and looking at Béatrix. "Do you feel for him that infinite devotion which triumphs over all suffering, and survives scorn, betrayal, even the certainty of never being loved again? Do you love him for himself, for the very joy of loving?"

"My dearest friend!" said the Marquise, much moved. "Well, be content, I will leave to-morrow."

"Do not go away; he loves you, I see it! And I love him so well that I should be in despair if I saw him miserable and unhappy. I had dreamed of many things for him; but if he loves you, that is all at an end."

"Yes, Camille, I love him," said the Marquise with delightful simplicity, but coloring.

"You love him, and you can resist him!" cried Camille. "No, you do not love him!"

"I do not know what new virtues he has aroused in me, but he has certainly made me ashamed of myself," said Béatrix. "I could wish to be virtuous and free, so as to have something else to sacrifice to him besides the remnants of a heart and disgraceful bonds. I will not accept an incomplete destiny either for him or for myself."

"Cold brain! it can love and calculate!" cried Camille, with a sort of horror.

"Whatever you please, but I will not blight his life or be a stone round his neck, an everlasting regret. As I cannot be his wife, I will not be his mistress. He has—you will

not laugh at me? No?—Well, then, his beautiful love has purified me."

Camille gave Béatrix a look—the wildest, fiercest look that ever a jealous woman flung at her rival.

"On that ground," said she, "I fancied I stood alone. Béatrix, that speech has parted us forever; we are no longer friends. We are at the beginning of a hideous struggle. Now, I tell you plainly, you must succumb or fly."

Félicité rushed away into her own room after showing to Béatrix, who was amazed, a face like an infuriated lioness.

"Are you coming to le Croisic to-morrow?" said Camille, lifting the curtain.

"Certainly," said the Marquise loftily; "I will not fly—nor will I succumb."

"I play with my hand on the table," retorted Camille; "I shall write to Conti."

Béatrix turned as white as her gauze scarf.

"For each of us life is at stake," replied Béatrix, who did not know what to decide on.

The violent passions to which this scene had given rise between the two women subsided during the night. They both reasoned with themselves, and came back to a reliance on the perfidious temporizing which fascinates most women—an excellent system between them and men, but a bad one between woman and woman. It was in the midst of this last storm that Mademoiselle des Touches heard the great voice which dominates even the bravest. Béatrix listened to the counsels of worldly wisdom; she feared the contempt of society. So Félicité's last masterstroke, weighted with the accents of intense jealousy, was perfectly successful. Calyste's blunder was remedied, but any fresh mistake might ruin his hopes forever.

The month of August was drawing to a close, the sky was magnificently clear. On the horizon the ocean, like a southern sea, had a hue as of molten silver, and fluttered to the strand in sparkling ripples. A sort of glistening

vapor, produced by the sun's rays falling directly on the sand, made an atmosphere at least equal to that of the tropics. The salt blossomed into little white stars on the surface of the salt-pans. The laborious marshmen, dressed in white on purpose to defy the heat of the sun, were at their post by daybreak armed with their long rakes, some leaning against the mud-walls dividing the plots, and watching this process of natural chemistry, familiar to them from their infancy; others playing with their little ones and wives. Those green dragons called excise-men smoked their pipes in peace. There was something Oriental in the picture, and certainly a Parisian, suddenly dropped there, would not have believed that he was in France.

The Baron and Baroness, who had made a pretext of their wish to see how the salt-raking was going on, were on the jetty, admiring the silent scene, where no sound was to be heard but the sea moaning with regular rhythm, where boats cut through the water, and the green belt of cultivated land was all the more lovely in its effect because it is so uncommon on the desert shores of the ocean.

"Well, my friends, I shall have seen the marshes of Guérande once more before I die," said the Baron to the marshmen, who stood in groups at the fringe of the marsh to greet him.

"As if the du Guénics died!" said one of the men.

At this moment the little party from les Touches came down the narrow road. The Marquise led the way alone, Calyste and Camille followed arm in arm. About twenty yards behind them came Gasselin.

"There are my father and mother," said Calyste to Camille.

The Marquise stopped. Madame du Guénic felt the most vehement repulsion at the sight of Béatrix, though she was dressed to advantage, in a broad-brimmed Leghorn hat trimmed with blue cornflowers, her hair waved beneath it; a dress of gray linen stuff, and a blue sash with long ends; in short, the garb of a princess disguised as a shepherdess.

"She has no heart!" said Fanny to herself.

"Mademoiselle," said Calyste to Camille, "here are Madame du Guénic and my father."

Then he added to his parents: "Mademoiselle des Touches and Madame la Marquise de Rochefide, *née* de Casteran—my father."

The Baron bowed to Mademoiselle des Touches, who bowed with an air of humble gratitude to the Baroness.

"She," thought Fanny, "really loves my boy; she seem to be thanking me for having brought him into the world."

"You, like me, are come to see if the yield is good; but you have more reasons than I for curiosity, Mademoiselle," said the Baron to Camille, "for you have property here."

"Mademoiselle is the richest owner of them all," said one of the marshmen; "and God preserve her, for she is a very good lady!"

The two parties bowed and went their way.

"You would never suppose Mademoiselle des Touches to be more than thirty," said the good man to his wife. "She is very handsome. And Calyste prefers that jade of a Parisian Marquise to that good daughter of Brittany?"

"Alas, yes!" said the Baroness.

A boat was lying at the end of the jetty; they got in, but not in high spirits. Béatrix was cold and dignified. Camille had scolded Calyste for his disobedience, and explained to him the position of his love affair. Calyste, sunk in gloomy despair, cast eyes at Béatrix, in which love and hatred struggled for the upper hand.

Not a word was spoken during the short passage from the jetty of Guérande to the extreme point of the harbor of le Croisic, the spot where the salt is shipped, being brought down to the shore by women in large earthen pans, which they carry on their heads, holding them in such a way as to look like caryatides. These women are barefoot, and wear a very short skirt. Many of them leave the kerchief that

covers their shoulders to fly loose, and several wear only a shift, and are the proudest, for the less clothes they wear the more they display their modest beauties.

The little Danish bark was taking in her cargo. Thus the landing of these two beautiful ladies excited the curiosity of the salt-carriers; and partly to escape them, as well as to do Calyste a service, Camille hurried on toward the rocks, leaving him with Béatrix. Gasselin lingered at least two hundred yards behind his master.

On the seaward side the peninsula of le Croisic is fringed with granite rocks so singularly grotesque in form that they can only be appreciated by travellers who are able from experience to make comparisons between the different grand spectacles of wild nature. The rocks of le Croisic have, perhaps, the same superiority over other similar scenes that the road to the Grande Chartreuse is admitted to have over other narrow gorges. Neither the Corsican shore, where the granite forms very remarkable reefs, nor that of Sardinia, where nature has revelled in grand and terrible effects, nor the basaltic formations of northern seas, have quite so distinctive a character. Fancy seems to have disported itself there in endless arabesques, where the most grotesque shapes mingle or stand forth. Every form may be seen there. Imagination may, perhaps, be weary of this vast collection of monsters, among which, in furious weather, the sea rushes in, and has at last polished down all the rough edges.

Under a natural vault, arched with a boldness only faintly imitated by Brunelleschi—for the greatest efforts of art are but a timid counterpart of some work of nature—you will find a basin polished like a marble bath, and strewn with smooth, fine white sand, in which you may bathe in safety in four feet of tepid water. As you walk on you admire the cool little creeks, under shelter of porticos rough-hewn but stately, like those of the Pitti palace—another imitation of the freaks of nature. The variety is infinite; nothing is lacking that the most extravagant fancy could invent or wish for.

There is even a large shrub of box,[1] a thing so rare on the shore of the Atlantic that perhaps this is the only specimen. This box-shrub, the greatest curiosity in le Croisic, where trees cannot grow, is at about a league from the port, on the utmost headland of the coast. On one of the promontories formed by the granite, rising so high above the sea that the waves cannot reach it even in the wildest storms, and facing the south, the floods have worn a hollow shelf about four feet deep. In this cleft, chance, or perhaps man, has deposited soil enough to enable a box, sown by some bird, to grow thick and closely shorn. The gnarled roots would indicate an age of at least three hundred years. Below it the rock falls sheer.

Some shock, of which the traces are stamped in indelible characters on this coast, has swept off the fragments of granite I know not whither. The sea comes, without breaking over any shoals, to the bottom of this cliff, where the water is more than five hundred feet deep. On either hand some reefs, just beneath the surface, form a sort of large *cirque*, traceable by the foaming breakers. It needs some courage and resolution to climb to the top of this little Gibraltar; its cap is almost spherical, and a gust of wind might carry the inquirer into the sea, or, which would be worse, on to the rocks below. This giant sentinel is like the lantern towers of old chateaux, whence miles of country could be scanned and attacks guarded against; from its height are seen the steeple and the thrifty fields of le Croisic, the sandhills that threaten to encroach on the arable land, and which have invaded the neighborhood of le Bourg de Batz. Some old men declare that there was, long ago, a castle on this spot. The sardine fishers have a name for this headland, which can be seen from afar at sea; but I must be forgiven for having forgotten that Breton name, as hard to pronounce as it is to remember.

Calyste led Béatrix toward this height, whence the view

[1] *Buis*, "whence (says Balzac) the word *buisson*," shrub or bush.

is superb, and where the forms of the granite surpass all the surprises they can have caused along the sandy margin of the shore.

It is vain to explain why Camille had hurried on in front; like a wounded animal, she longed for solitude; she lost herself in the grottos, reappeared on the bowlders, chased the crabs out of their holes, or discovered them in the very act of their eccentric behavior. Not to be inconvenienced by her woman's skirts, she had put on Turkish trousers with embroidered frills, a short blouse, and a felt hat; and, by way of a traveller's staff, she carried a riding-whip, for she was always vain of her strength and agility. Thus attired, she was a hundred times handsomer than Béatrix; she had tied a little red China silk shawl across her bosom and knotted behind, as we wrap a child. For some little time Béatrix and Calyste saw her flitting over rocks and rifts like a will-o'-the-wisp, trying to stultify grief by facing perils.

She was the first to arrive at the box cliff, and sat down in the shade of one of the clefts, lost in meditation. What could such a woman as she do in old age, after drinking the cup of fame which all great talents, too greedy to sip the dull driblets of vanity, drain at one draught? She has since confessed that then and there, one of the coincidences suggested by a mere trifle, by one of the accidents which count for nothing with ordinary people, though they open a gulf of meditation to a great soul, brought her to a decision as to the strange deed which was afterward the close of her social career. She drew out of her pocket a little box in which she had brought, in case of thirst, some strawberry pastilles; she ate several; but as she sucked them, she could not help reflecting that the strawberries, which were no more, yet lived by their qualities. Hence she concluded that it might be the same with us. The sea offered her an image of the infinite. No great mind can get away from the infinite, granting the immortality of the soul, without being brought to infer some religious future. This idea still haunted her when she smelled at her scent-bottle of Eau de Portugal.

Her manœuvres for handing Béatrix over to Calyste then struck her as very sordid; she felt the woman die in her, and she emerged the noble angelic being hitherto veiled in the flesh. Her vast intellect, her learning, her acquirements, her spurious loves had brought her face to face with what? Who could have foretold it? With the yearning mother, the consoler of the sorrowing—the Roman Church, so mild toward repentance, so poetical to poets, so artless with children, so deep and mysterious to wild and anxious spirits, that they can forever plunge deeper into it and still satisfy their inextinguishable curiosity, which is constantly excited.

She glanced back at the devious ways to which she had been led by Calyste, comparing them to the tortuous paths among these rocks. Calyste was still in her eyes the lovely messenger from heaven, a divine leader. She smothered earthly in sacred love.

After walking on for some time in silence, Calyste, at an exclamation from Béatrix at the beauty of the ocean, very different from the Mediterranean, could not resist drawing a comparison between that sea and his love, in its purity and extent, its agitations, its depth, its eternity.

"It has a rock for its shore," said Béatrix with a laugh.

"When you speak to me in that tone," replied he with a heavenly flash, "I see you and hear you, and I can find an angel's patience; but when I am alone, you would pity me if you could see me. My mother cries over my grief."

"Listen, Calyste, this must come to an end," said the Marquise, stepping down on to the sandy path. "Perhaps we are now in the one propitious spot for the utterance of such things, for never in my life have I seen one where nature was more in harmony with my thoughts. I have seen Italy, where everything speaks of love; I have seen Switzerland, where all is fresh and expressive of true happiness, laborious happiness, where the verdure, the calm waters, the most placid outlines are overpowered by the snow-crowned Alps; but I have seen nothing which more

truly paints the scorching barrenness of my life than this little plain, withered by sea gales, corroded by salt mists, where melancholy tillage struggles in the face of the immense ocean and under the hedgerows of Brittany, whence rise the towers of your Guérande.

"Well, Calyste, that is Béatrix. Do not attach yourself to that. I love you, but I will never be yours, for I am conscious of my inward desolation. Ah! you can never know how cruel I am to myself when I tell you this. No, you shall never see your idol—if I am your idol—stoop; it shall not fall from the height where you have set it. I have now a horror of a passion which the world and religion alike reprobate; I will be humbled no more, nor will I steal happiness. I shall remain where I am; I shall be the sandy, unfertile desert, without verdure or flowers, which lies before you."

"And if you should be deserted?" said Calyste.

"Then I should go and beg for mercy. I would humble myself before the man I have sinned against, but I would never run the risk of rushing into happiness which I know would end."

"End?" cried Calyste.

"End," repeated the Marquise, interrupting the rhapsody into which her lover was plunging, by a tone which reduced him to silence.

This contradiction gave rise in the youth's soul to one of those wordless rages which are known only to those who have loved without hope. He and Béatrix walked on for about three hundred yards in utter silence, looking neither at the sea, nor the rocks, nor the fields of le Croisic.

"I should make you so happy!" said Calyste.

"All men begin by promising us happiness, and they bequeath to us shame, desertion, disgust. I have nothing of which to accuse the man to whom I ought to be faithful; he made me no promises; I went to him. But the only way to make my fault less is to make it eternal."

"Say at once, Madame, that you do not love me! I, who

love you, know by myself that love does not argue, it sees nothing but itself, there is no sacrifice I could not make for it. Command me, and I will attempt the impossible. The man who, of old, scorned his mistress for having thrown her glove to the lions and commanding him to rescue it, did not love! He misprized your right to test us, to make sure of our love, and never to lay down your arms but to superhuman magnanimity. To you I would sacrifice my family, my name, my future life."

"What an insult lies in that word sacrifice!" replied she in a reproachful tone, which made Calyste feel all the folly of his expression.

Only women who love wholly, or utter coquettes, can take a word as a fulcrum, and spring to prodigious heights; wit and feeling act on the same lines; but the woman who loves is grieved, the coquette is contemptuous.

"You are right," said Calyste, dropping two tears, "the word can only be applied to the achievement you demand of me."

"Be silent," said Béatrix, startled by a reply in which for the first time Calyste really expressed his love. "I have done wrong enough.—Do not tempt me."

They had just reached the base of the Box-cliff. Calyste felt intoxicating joys in helping the Marquise to climb the rock; she was bent on mounting to the very top. The poor boy thought it the height of rapture to support her by the waist, to feel her slightly tremulous: she needed him! The unhoped-for joy turned his brain, he saw nothing, he put his arm round her body.

"Well!" said she with an imperious look.

"You will never be mine?" he asked in a voice choked by a storm in his blood.

"Never, my dear," said she. "To you I can only be Béatrix—a dream. And is not a dream sweet? We shall know no bitterness, no regrets, no repentance."

"And you will return to Conti?"

"There is no help for it."

"Then you shall never more be any man's," cried Calyste, flinging her from him with mad violence.

He listened for her fall before throwing himself after her, but he only heard a dull noise, the harsh rending of stuff, and the heavy sound of a body falling on earth. Instead of tumbling head foremost, Béatrix had turned over; she had fallen into the box-tree; but she would have rolled to the bottom of the sea nevertheless if her gown had not caught on a corner, and, by tearing, checked the force of her fall on the bush.

Mademoiselle des Touches, who had witnessed the scene, could not call out, for she was aghast, and could only signal to Gasselin to hasten up. Calyste leaned over, prompted by a fierce sort of curiosity; he saw Béatrix as she lay, and shuddered. She seemed to be praying; she thought she must die, she felt the box-tree giving way. With the sudden presence of mind inspired by love, and the supernatural agility of youth in the face of danger, he let himself down the nine feet of rock by his hands, clinging to the rough edges, to the little shelf, where he was in time to rescue the Marquise by taking her in his arms, at the risk of their both falling into the sea. When he caught Béatrix she became unconscious; but he could dream that she was his, wholly his, in this aerial bed where they might have to remain a long time, and his first feeling was an impulse of gladness.

"Open your eyes, forgive me!" said Calyste. "Or we die together."

"Die?" said she, opening her eyes, and unsealing her pale lips.

Calyste received the word with a kiss, and then was aware of a spasmodic thrill in the Marquise, which was ecstasy to him. At that instant Gasselin's nailed shoes were audible above them. Camille followed the Breton, and they were anxiously considering the means of saving the lovers.

"There is but one way, Mademoiselle," said Gasselin.

"I will let myself down; they will climb up on my shoulders, and you will give them your hand."

"And you?" said Camille.

The man seemed astonished at being held of any account when his young master was in danger.

"It will be better to fetch a ladder from le Croisic," said Camille.

"She is a knowing one, she is!" said Gasselin to himself, as he went off. Béatrix, in a feeble voice, begged to be laid on the ground; she felt faint. Calyste laid her down on the cool earth between the rock and the box-tree.

"I saw you, Calyste," said Camille. "Whether Béatrix dies or is saved, this must never be anything but an accident."

"She will hate me!" he cried, his eyes full of tears.

"She will worship you," replied Camille. "This is an end to our excursion; she must be carried to les Touches.—What would have become of you if she had been killed?" she said.

"I should have followed her."

"And your mother?—and," she softly added after a pause, "and me?"

Calyste stood pale, motionless, and silent, his back against the granite. Gasselin very soon returned from one of the little farms that lie scattered among the fields, running with a ladder he had borrowed. Béatrix had somewhat recovered her strength. When Gasselin had fixed the ladder, the Marquise, helped by Gasselin, who begged Calyste to put Camille's red shawl round Béatrix under her arms, and to give him up the ends, climbed up to the little plateau, where Gasselin took her in his arms like a child, and carried her down to the shore.

"Death I would not say nay to—but pain!" said she in a weak voice to Mademoiselle des Touches.

The faintness and shock from which Béatrix was suffering made it necessary that she should be carried as far as the farm whence Gasselin had borrowed the ladder. Calyste, Gasselin, and Camille took off such garments as they could

dispense with, and made a sort of mattress on the ladder, on which they laid Béatrix, carrying it like a litter. The farm people offered their bed. Gasselin hurried off to the spot where the horses were waiting for them, took one, and fetched a surgeon from le Croisic, after ordering the boatmen to come up the creek that lay nearest to the farm. Calyste, sitting on a low stool, answered Camille's remarks with nods and rare monosyllables, and Mademoiselle des Touches was equally uneasy as to Béatrix's condition and Calyste's.

After being bled, the patient felt better; she could speak; she consented to go in the boat; and at about five in the afternoon they crossed to Guérande, where the town doctor was waiting for her. The news of the accident had spread in this deserted and almost uninhabited land with amazing rapidity.

Calyste spent the night at les Touches at the foot of Béatrix's bed with Camille. The doctor promised that by next morning the Marquise would suffer from nothing worse than stiffness. Through Calyste's despair a great happiness beamed. He was at the foot of Béatrix's bed watching her asleep or waking; he could study her pale face, her lightest movements. Camille smiled bitterly as she recognized in the lad all the symptoms of a passion such as tinges the soul and mind of a man by becoming a part of his life at a time when no thought, no cares counteract this torturing mental process.

Calyste would never discern the real woman in Béatrix. How guilelessly did the young Breton allow her to read his most secret soul!—Why, he fancied she was his, merely because he found himself here, in her room, admiring her in the disorder of the bed. He watched Béatrix in her slightest movement with rapturous attention; his face expressed such sweet curiosity, his ecstasy was so artlessly betrayed, that there was a moment when the two women looked at each other with a smile. As Calyste read in the invalid's

fine sea-green eyes a mixed expression of confusion, love, and amusement, he blushed and looked away.

"Did I not say to you, Calyste, that you men promised us happiness and ended by throwing us over a precipice?"

As he heard this little jest, spoken in a charming tone of voice, which betrayed some change in Béatrix's heart, Calyste knelt down, took one of her moist hands, which she allowed him to hold, and kissed it very submissively.

"You have every right to reject my love forever," said he, "and I have no right ever to say a single word to you again."

"Ah!" cried Camille, as she saw the expression of her friend's face, and compared it with that she had seen after every effort of diplomacy; "love unaided will always have more wit than all the world besides.—Take your draught, my dear, and go to sleep."

This evening spent by Calyste with Mademoiselle des Touches, who read books on mystical theology, while Calyste read "Indiana"—the first work of Camille's famous rival, in which he found the captivating picture of a young man who loved with idolatry and devotion, with mysterious rapture, and for his whole life—a book of fatal teaching for him!—this evening left an ineffaceable mark on the heart of the unhappy youth, for Félicité at last convinced him that any woman who was not a monster could only be happy and flattered in every vanity, by knowing herself to be the object of a crime.

"You would never, never, have thrown me into the sea!" said poor Camille, wiping away a tear.

Toward morning Calyste, quite worn out, fell asleep in his chair. It was now the Marquise's turn to look at the pretty boy, pale with agitation and his first love-watch; she heard him murmuring words in his sleep.

"He loves in his very dreams!" said she to Camille.

"We must send him home to bed," said Félicité, awaking him.

No one was alarmed at the du Guénics'; Mademoiselle des Touches had written a few words to the Baroness.

Calyste dined at les Touches next day. He found Béatrix up, pale, languid, and tired. But there was no hardness now in her speech or looks. After that evening, which Camille filled with music, seating herself at the piano to allow Calyste to hold and press Béatrix's hands while they could say nothing to each other, there was never a storm at les Touches. Félicité completely effaced herself.

Women like Madame de Rochefide, cold, fragile, hard, and thin—such women, whose throat shows a form of collar-bone suggestive of the feline race—have souls as pale and colorless as their pale gray or green eyes; to melt them, to vitrify these flints, a thunderbolt is needed. To Béatrix this thunderbolt had fallen in Calyste's rage of love and attempt on her life; it was such a flame as nothing can resist, changing the most stubborn nature. Béatrix felt herself softened; pure and true love flooded her soul with its soothing lapping glow. She floated in a mild and tender atmosphere of feeling hitherto unknown, in which she felt ennobled, elevated; she had entered into the heaven where, in all ages, woman has dwelt, in Brittany. She enjoyed the respectful worship of this boy, whose happiness cost her so little; for a smile, a look, a word was enough for Calyste. Such value set by feeling on such trifles touched her extremely. To this angelic soul, the glove she had worn could be more than her whole body was to the man who ought to have adored her. What a contrast!

What woman could have resisted this persistent idolatry? She was sure of being understood and obeyed. If she had bid Calyste to risk his life for her smallest whim, he would not even have paused to think. And Béatrix acquired an indescribable air of imposing dignity; she looked at love on its loftiest side, and sought in it a footing, as it were, which would enable her to remain, in Calyste's eyes, the supreme woman; she wished her power

over him to be eternal. She coquetted all the more persistently because she felt herself weak.

For a whole week she played the invalid with engaging hypocrisy. How many times did she walk round and round the green lawn that spread on the garden side of the house, leaning on Calyste's arm, and reviving in Camille the torments she had caused her during the first week of her visit!

"Well, my dear, you are taking him the Grand Tour!" said Mademoiselle des Touches to the Marquise.

One evening, before the excursion to le Croisic, the two women had been discussing love, and laughing over the various ways in which men made their declarations, confessing that the most skilful, and, of course, therefore the least devoted, did not waste time in wandering through the mazes of sentimentality, and were right; so that those who loved best were, at a certain stage, the worst used.

"They set to work as la Fontaine did to get into the Academy," said Camille.

Her remark now recalled this conversation to Béatrix's memory while reproving her Machiavelian conduct. Madame de Rochefide had absolute power over Calyste, and could keep him within the bounds she chose, reminding him by a look or a gesture of his horrible violence by the seashore. Then the poor martyr's eyes would fill with tears; he was silent, swallowing down his arguments, his hopes, his griefs, with a heroism that would have touched any other woman.

Her infernal coquetting brought him to such desperation that he came one day to throw himself into Camille's arms and ask her advice. Béatrix, armed with Calyste's letter, had picked out the passage in which he said that loving was the chief happiness, that being loved was second to it, and she had made use of this axiom to suppress his passion to such a degree of respectful idolatry as she chose to permit. She revelled in having her spirit soothed by the sweet concert of praise and adoration which nature suggests to youth; and there is so much art too, though un-

conscious, so much innocent seductiveness in their cries, their prayers, their exclamations, their appeals to themselves, in their readiness to mortgage the future, that Béatrix took care not to answer him. She had told him she doubted! Happiness was not yet in question, only the permission to love that the lad was constantly asking for, persistently bent on taking the citadel from the strongest side—that of the mind and heart.

The woman who is bravest in word is often weak in action. After seeing what progress he had made by his attempt to push Béatrix into the sea, it is strange that Calyste should not have continued the pursuit of happiness through violence; but love in these young lads is so ecstatic and religious that it insists on absolute conviction. Hence its sublimity.

However, one day Calyste, driven to bay by desire, complained vehemently to Camille of Madame de Rochefide's conduct.

"I wanted to cure you by enabling you to know her from the first," replied Mademoiselle des Touches, "but you spoiled all by your impetuosity. Ten days since you were her master; now you are her slave, my poor boy. So you would never be strong enough to carry out my orders."

"What must I do?"

"Quarrel with her on the ground of her cruelty. A woman is always carried away by talk; make her treat you badly, and do not return to les Touches till she sends for you."

There is a moment in every severe disease when the patient accepts the most painful remedies, and submits to the most horrible operations. Calyste was at this crisis. He took Camille's advice; he stayed at home for two days; but on the third he was tapping at Béatrix's door and telling her that he and Camille were waiting breakfast for her.

"Another chance lost!" said Camille, seeing him sneak back so tamely.

During those two days Béatrix had stopped frequently

at the window whence the Guérande road could be seen. When Camille found her there she said that she was studying the effect of the gorse by the roadside, its golden bloom blazing under the September sun. Thus Camille had read her friend's secret; she had only to say the word for Calyste to be happy. But she did not speak it; she was still too much a woman to urge him to the deed so dreaded by young hearts, who seem aware of all that their ideal must lose by it.

Béatrix kept Camille and Calyste waiting some little time; if he had been any other man, the delay would have seemed significant, for the Marquise's dress suggested her wish to fascinate Calyste and prevent his absenting himself again. After breakfast she went to walk in the garden, and enchanted him with joy, as she enchanted him with love, by expressing her wish to go with him again to see the spot where she had so nearly perished.

"Let us go alone," said Calyste in a broken voice.

"If I refused," said she, "I might give you reason to think that you were dangerous. Alas! as I have told you a thousand times, I belong to another, and must forever be his alone. I chose him, knowing nothing of love. The fault was twofold, and the punishment double."

When she spoke thus, her eyes moist with the rare tears such women can shed, Calyste felt a sort of pity that cooled his furious ardor; he worshipped her then as a Madonna. We must not expect that different natures should resemble each other in the expression of their feelings, any more than we look for the same fruits from different trees. Béatrix at this moment was torn in her mind; she hesitated between herself and Calyste; between the world, where she hoped some day to be seen again, and perfect happiness; between ruining herself finally by a second unpardonable passion and social forgiveness. She was beginning to listen without even affected annoyance to the language of blind love; she allowed herself to be soothed by the gentle hands of pity. Already, many times, she had been moved to tears

by hearing Calyste promising her love enough to make up for all she could lose in the eyes of the world, and pitying her for being bound to such an evil genius, to a man as false as Conti. More than once she had not silenced Calyste when she had told him of the misery and sufferings that overwhelmed her in Italy when she found that she did not reign alone in Conti's heart. Camille had given Calyste more than one lecture on this subject, and Calyste had profited by them.

"I," said he, "love you wholly; you will find in me none of the triumphs of art, nor the pleasures derived from seeing a crowd bewildered by the wonders of talent; my only talent is for loving you, my only joys will be in yours; no woman's admiration will seem to me worthy of consideration; you need fear no odious rivals. You are misprized; and wherever you are accepted I desire also to be accepted every day."

She listened to his words with a drooping head, allowing him to kiss her hands, and confessing to herself silently but very readily that she was perhaps a misunderstood angel.

"I am too much humiliated," she replied; "my past deprives me of all security for the future."

It was a great day for Calyste when, on reaching les Touches at seven in the morning, he saw from between two gorse bushes Béatrix at a window, wearing the same straw hat that she had worn on the day of their excursion. He felt quite dazzled. These small details of passion make the world wider.

Only Frenchwomen, perhaps, have the secret of these theatrical touches; they owe them to their graceful wit, of which they infuse just so much into feeling as it can bear without losing its force.

Ah! how lightly she leaned on Calyste's arm. They went out together by the garden gate leading to the sandhills. Béatrix thought their wildness pleasing; she saw the little rigid plants that grow there with their pink blos-

soms, and gathered several, with some of the Carthusian pinks, which also thrive on barren sands, and divided the flowers significantly with Calyste, to whom these blossoms and leaves were to have an eternally sinister association.

"We will add a sprig of box!" said she with a smile.

She stood for some time waiting for the boat on the jetty, where Calyste told her of his childish eagerness the day of her arrival.

"That expedition, which I heard of, was the cause of my severity that first day," said she.

Throughout their walk Madame de Rochefide talked in the half-jesting tone of a woman who loves, and with tenderness and freedom of manner. Calyste might believe himself loved. But when, as they went along the strand under the rocks, and down into one of those pretty bays where the waves have thrown up a marvellous mosaic of the strangest marbles, with which they played like children at picking up the finest specimens—when Calyste, at the height of intoxication, proposed in so many words that they should fly to Ireland, she assumed a dignified and mysterious air, begged to take his arm, and went on toward the cliff she had called her Tarpeian rock.

"My dear fellow," said she, as they slowly climbed the fine block of granite she meant to take as her pedestal, "I have not courage enough to conceal all you are to me. For the last ten years I have known no happiness to compare with that we have just enjoyed in hunting for shells among those tide-washed rocks, in exchanging pebbles, of which I shall have a necklace made, more precious in my eyes than if it were composed of the finest diamonds. I have been a child again, a little girl such as I was at thirteen or fourteen, when I was worthy of you. The love I have been so happy as to inspire you with has elevated me in my own eyes. Understand this in all its magical meaning. You have made me the proudest, the happiest of my sex, and you will live longer in my memory than I probably shall in yours."

At this moment she had reached the summit of the cliff,

whence the vast ocean was seen spreading on one side, and on the other the Brittany coast with its golden islets, its feudal towers, and its clumps of gorse. Never had a woman a finer stage on which to make a grand avowal.

"But," she went on, "I am not my own; I am more firmly bound by my own act than I was by law. So you are punished for my misfortune; you must be content to know that we suffer together. Dante never saw Beatrice again, Petrarch never possessed his Laura. Such disasters befall none but great souls.

"Oh! if ever I should be deserted, if I should fall a thousand degrees lower in shame and infamy, if your Béatrix is cruelly misunderstood by a world that will be loathsome to her, if she should be the most despised of women! . . . Then, beloved child," she added, taking his hand, "you will know that she is the foremost of them all, that she could rise to heaven with your support. But then, my friend," she added, with a lofty glance at him, "when you want to throw her down, do not miss your stroke; after your love, death!"

Calyste had his arm round her waist; he clasped her to his heart. To confirm her tender words, Madame de Rochefide sealed Calyste's forehead with the most chaste and timid kiss. Then they went down the path and returned slowly, talking like two people who perfectly understand and enter into each other's minds; she believing she had secured peace, he no longer doubting that he was to be happy—and both deceived.

Calyste hoped from what Camille had observed that Conti would be delighted to seize the opportunity of giving up Béatrix. The Marquise on her part abandoned herself to the uncertainty of things, waiting on chance. Calyste was too deeply in love and too ingenuous to create the chance. They both reached les Touches in the most delightful frame of mind, going in by the garden gate, of which Calyste had taken the key.

It was now about six o'clock. The intoxicating per-

fumes, the mild atmosphere, the golden tones of the evening light were all in harmony with their tender mood and talk. Their steps were matched and equal as those of lovers are; their movements betrayed the unison of their minds. Such silence reigned at les Touches that the sound of the opening and closing gate echoed distinctly, and must have been heard all over the grounds. As Calyste and Béatrix had said all they had to say, and their agitating walk had tired them, they came in slowly and without speaking.

Suddenly, as she turned an angle, Béatrix was seized with a spasm of horror—the infectious dread that is caused by the sight of a reptile, and that chilled Calyste before he saw its occasion. On a bench under a weeping ash Conti sat talking to Camille Maupin. Madame de Rochefide's convulsive internal trembling was more evident than she wished. Calyste now knew how dear he was to this woman who had just built up the barrier between herself and him, no doubt with a view to securing a few days more for coquetting before overleaping it.

In one instant a tragical drama in endless perspective was felt in each heart.

"You did not expect me so soon, I dare say," said the artist, offering Béatrix his arm.

The Marquise could not avoid relinquishing Calyste's arm and taking Conti's. This undignified transition, so imperatively demanded, so full of offence to the later love, was too much for Calyste, who went to throw himself on the bench by Camille, after exchanging the most distant greeting with his rival. He felt a hundred contending sensations. On discerning how much Béatrix loved him, his impulse was to rush at the artist and declare that she was his; but the poor woman's moral convulsion, betraying her sufferings —for she had in that one moment paid the forfeit of all her sins—had startled him so much that he remained stupefied, stricken, like her, by relentless necessity. These antagonistic impulses produced the most violent storm of feeling he had yet known since he had loved Béatrix.

Madame de Rochefide and Conti went past the seat where Calyste had thrown himself by Camille's side; the Marquise looking at her rival with one of those terrible flashes by which a woman can convey everything. She avoided Calyste's eye, and seemed to listen to Conti, who was talking lightly.

"What can they be saying?" asked Calyste of Camille.

"Dear child, you have no idea yet of the terrible hold a man has over a woman on the strength of a dead passion. Béatrix could not refuse him her hand. He is laughing at her, no doubt, over her fresh love affair; he guessed it, of course, from your behavior, and the way in which you came in together when he saw you."

"He is laughing at her!" cried the vehement youth.

"Keep calm," said Camille, "or you will lose the few chances that remain to you. If he wounds Béatrix too much in her vanities, she will trample him underfoot like a worm. But he is astute; he will know how to do it cleverly. He will not suppose that the haughty Madame de Rochefide could possibly be false to him! It would be too base to love a young man for his beauty! He will no doubt speak of you to her as a mere boy bewitched by the notion of possessing a Marquise and of ruling the destinies of two women. Finally, he will thunder with the rattling artillery of insulting insinuations. Then Béatrix will be obliged to combat him with false denials, of which he will take advantage, and remain master of the field."

"Ah!" cried Calyste, "he does not love. I should leave her free. Love demands a choice renewed every minute, confirmed every day. The morrow is the justification of yesterday, and increases our hoard of joys.—A few days later, and he would not have found us here. What brought him back?"

"A journalist's taunt," said Camille. "The opera on whose success he had counted is a failure—a dead failure. These words spoken in the greenroom, perhaps by Claude Vignon, 'It is hard to lose your reputation and your mistress

both at once!' stung him no doubt in all his vanities. Love based on mean sentiments is merciless.

"I questioned him; but who can trust so false and deceitful a nature? He seemed weary of poverty and of love, disgusted with life. He regretted having connected himself so publicly with the Marquise, and in speaking of their past happiness fell into a strain of poetic melancholy rather too elegant to be genuine. He hoped no doubt to extract the secret of your love from the joy his flattery must give me."

"Well?" said Calyste, looking at Béatrix and Conti returning, and listening no longer to Camille.

Camille had prudently kept on the defensive; she had not betrayed either Calyste's secret or Béatrix's. The artist was a man to dupe any one in the world, and Mademoiselle des Touches warned Calyste to be on his guard with him.

"My dear child," said she, "this is for you the most critical moment; such prudence and skill are needed as you have not, and you will be fooled by the most cunning man on earth; for I can do no more for you."

A bell announced that dinner was served. Conti offered his arm to Camille, Béatrix took that of Calyste. Camille let the Marquise lead the way; she had a moment to look at Calyste and enjoin prudence by putting her finger to her lips.

All through dinner Conti was in the highest spirits. This was perhaps a way of gauging Madame de Rochefide, who played her part badly. As a coquette she might have deceived Conti; but, being seriously in love, she betrayed herself. The wily musician, far from watching her, seemed not to observe her embarrassment. At dessert he began talking of women and crying up their noble feelings.

"A woman who would desert us in prosperity will sacrifice everything to us in adversity," said he. "Women have the advantage of men in constancy; a woman must be deeply offended indeed to throw over a first lover; she clings to him as to her honor; a second love is a disgrace—" and so forth.

He was astoundingly moral; he burned incense before the altar on which a heart was bleeding pierced by a thousand

stabs. Only Camille and Béatrix understood the virulence of the acrid satire he poured out in the form of praises. Now and again they both colored, but they were obliged to control themselves; they went up to Camille's sitting-room arm in arm, and with one consent passed through the larger drawing-room, where there were no lights, and they could exchange a few words.

"I cannot endure to let Conti walk over my prostrate body, to give him a right over me," said Béatrix in an undertone. "The convict on the hulks is always at the mercy of the man he is chained to. I am lost! I must go back to the hulks of love!—And it is you who have sent me back. Ah, you made him come a day too late—or too soon. I recognize your infernal gift of romance. Yes, the revenge is complete, the climax perfect."

"I could threaten you that I would write to Conti, but as to doing it!—I am incapable of such a thing!" cried Camille. "You are miserable, so I forgive you."

"What will become of Calyste?" said the Marquise, with the exquisite artlessness of vanity.

"Then is Conti taking you away?" cried Camille.

"Ah! you expect to triumph?" retorted Béatrix.

The Marquise spoke the hideous words with rage, her beautiful features distorted, while Camille tried to conceal her gladness under an assumed expression of regret; but the light in her eyes gave the lie to the gravity of her face, and Béatrix could see through a mask! When they saw each other by candlelight, sitting on the divan where during the last three weeks so many comedies had been played out, where the secret tragedy of so many thwarted passions had had its beginning, the two women studied each other for the last time; they saw that they were divided by a deep gulf of hatred.

"I leave you Calyste," said Béatrix, seeing her rival's eyes. "But I am fixed in his heart, and no woman will oust me."

Camille retorted by quoting, in a tone of subtle irony

which stung the Marquise to the quick, the famous speech of Mazarin's niece to Louis XIV.: "You reign, you love him, and you are going!"

Neither of them throughout this scene, which was a stormy one, noticed the absence of Calyste and Conti. The artist had remained at table with his rival, desiring him to keep him company, and finish a bottle of champagne.

"We have something to say to each other," said Conti, to anticipate any refusal.

In the position in which they stood to each other, the young Breton was obliged to obey the behest.

"My dear boy," said the singer in a soothing voice when Calyste had drunk two glasses of wine, "we are a couple of good fellows; we may be frank with each other. I did not come here because I was suspicious. Béatrix loves me." And he assumed a fatuous air. "For my part, I love her no longer; I have come, not to carry her off, but to break with her and leave her the credit of the rupture. You are young; you do not know how necessary it is to seem the victim when you feel that you are the executioner. Young men spout fire and flame, they make a parade of throwing over a woman, they often scorn her and make her hate them; but a wise man gets himself dismissed, and puts on a humiliated expression which leaves the lady some regrets and a sweet sense of superiority. The displeasure of the divinity is not irremediable, while abdication is past all reparation.

"You, happily for you, do not yet know how our lives may be hampered by the senseless promises which women are such fools as to accept, when gallantry requires us to tie such slip-knots to divert the idle hours of happiness. The pair then swear eternal fidelity. A man has some adventure with a woman—he does not fail to assure her politely that he hopes to live and die with her; he pretends to be impatiently awaiting the demise of a husband while earnestly wishing him perfect health. If the husband should die, there are women so provincial or so tenacious, so silly or so wily, as to rush on the man, crying, 'I am free—here I am!'

"Not one of us is free. The spent ball recoils and falls into the midst of our best-planned triumph or happiness.

"I foresaw that you would love Béatrix; I left her in a situation in which she must needs flirt with you without abdicating her sacred majesty, were it only to annoy that angel, Camille Maupin. Well, my dear fellow, love her; you will be doing me a service. I only want her to behave atrociously to me. I dread her pride and her virtue. —Perhaps, in spite of goodwill on my side, some time will be required for this manœuvre. On such occasions the one who does not take the first step wins. Just now, as we walked round the lawn, I tried to tell her that I knew all, and wished her joy of her happiness. Well, she was very angry.

"I, at this moment, am in love with the youngest of our singers, Mademoiselle Falcon, of the Opera, and I want to marry her. Yes, I have got so far as that! But when you come to Paris, you will say I have exchanged a Marquise for a Queen!"

Joy shed its glory on Calyste's candid face; he confessed his love; this was all that Conti wanted.

There is not a man in the world, however *blasé*, however depraved, whose love does not revive as soon as it is threatened by a rival. We may wish to be rid of a woman; we do not wish that she should throw us over. When lovers have come to this extremity, men and women alike try to be first in the field, so cruel is the wound to their self-respect. Perhaps what is at stake is all that Society has thrown into that feeling; it is indeed less a matter of self-respect than of life itself, the whole future is in the balance; we feel as if we were losing not the interest, but the capital.

Calyste, cross-examined by the artist, related all that had happened during these three weeks at les Touches, and was delighted with Conti, who concealed his rage under a semblance of delightful good-nature.

"Let us go upstairs," said he. "Women are not trustful; they will not understand how we can have sat together

for so long without clutching at each other's hair; they might come down to listen.—I will do all I can for you, my dear child. I will be odious, rude, and jealous with the Marquise; I will constantly suspect her of deceiving me—there is nothing more certain to lead a woman to a betrayal; you will be happy, and I shall be free. You, this evening, must assume the part of a disconcerted lover; I shall play the suspicious and jealous man. Pity the angel for her inthralment to a man without fine feelings—weep! You can weep, you are young. I, alas, can no longer weep; it is a great advantage lost."

Calyste and Conti went upstairs. The musician, requested to sing by his young rival, chose the greatest test known to musical executants, the famous "*Pria che spunti l'aurora*," which Rubini himself never attempts without a qualm, and in which Conti had often triumphed. Never had he been more wonderful than at this moment when so many feelings were seething in his breast. Calyste was in ecstasies. At the first note of the cavatina the singer fired a glance at the Marquise which gave cruel significance to the words, and which was understood. Camille, playing the accompaniment, guessed that it was a command that made Béatrix bow her head. She looked at Calyste, and suspected that the boy had fallen into some snare in spite of her warnings. She was certain of it when the youth went gleefully to bid Béatrix good-night, kissing her hand and pressing it with a little knowing and confident look.

By the time Calyste had reached Guérande the ladies'-maid and servants were packing Conti's travelling carriage; and "before the dawn," as he had sung, he had carried off Béatrix, with Camille's horses, as far as the first posting-house.

Under cover of the darkness, Madame de Rochefide was able to look back at Guérande, whose tower, white in the daybreak, stood out in the gray light. She gave herself up to melancholy, for she was leaving there one of the fairest flowers of life—love such as the purest girls may dream of.

Respect of persons was crushing the only true love this woman had ever known, or could ever know, in all her life. The woman of the world was obeying the laws of the world, sacrificing love to appearances, as some women sacrifice it to religion or to duty. From this point of view, this terrible story is that of many women.

Next day, at about noon, Calyste arrived at les Touches. When he reached the turn in the road whence, yesterday, he had seen Béatrix at the window, he caught sight of Camille, who hurried out to meet him. At the bottom of the stairs she said this cruel word: "Gone!"

"Béatrix?" cried Calyste, stunned.

"You were duped by Conti. You told me nothing; I could do nothing."

She led the poor boy to her little drawing-room; he sank on the divan, in the place where he had so often seen the Marquise, and melted into tears. Félicité said nothing; she smoked her hookah, knowing that nothing can stem the first rush of such suffering, which is always deaf and speechless. Calyste, since there was nothing to be done, stayed there all day in a state of utter torpor. Just before dinner, Camille tried to say a few words to him, after begging that he would listen to her.

"My dear boy," said she, "you have been the cause to me of intense suffering, and I have not, as you have, a fair future life in which to recover. To me the earth has no further springtime, the soul no further love. So I, to find comfort, must look higher.

"Here, the day before Béatrix came, I painted her portrait; I would not darken it, you would have thought that I was jealous. Now, listen to the truth. Madame de Rochefide is as far as possible from being worthy of you. The display of her fall was not necessary, but she would have been nobody but for that scandal; she made it on purpose to have a part to play. She is one of those women who prefer the parade of wrongdoing to the calm peace of happiness; they affront Society to wring from it the evil

gift of a slander; they must be talked about, at whatever cost. She was eaten up by vanity. Her fortune and wit had not availed to give her the feminine dominion which she had tried to conquer by presiding over a *salon;* she had fancied that she could achieve the celebrity of the Duchesse de Langeais and the Vicomtesse de Beauséant; but the world is just, it bestows the honors of its interest only on genuine passion.

"Her flight was not justified by any obstacles. Damocles' sword did not hang glittering over her festivities; and besides, in Paris, those who love truly and sincerely may easily be happy in a quiet way. In short, if she could be tender and loving, she would not have gone off last night with Conti."

Camille talked for a long time, and very eloquently, but this last effort was in vain; she ceased on seeing a shrug, by which Calyste conveyed his entire belief in Béatrix, and she insisted on his coming down and sitting with her at dinner, for he found it impossible to eat.

It is only while we are very young that these spasmodic symptoms occur. At a later period the organs have formed habits, and are, as it were, hardened. The reaction of the moral system on the physical is never strong enough to induce mortal illness unless the constitution preserves its original delicacy. A man can resist a violent grief which kills a youth, less because his feelings are not so strong than because his organs are stronger. Mademoiselle des Touches was indeed alarmed from the first by Calyste's calm and resigned attitude after the first flood of tears. Before leaving the house, he begged to see Béatrix's room once more, and hid his face in the pillow on which hers had rested.

"This is folly!" said he, shaking hands with Camille and leaving her, sunk in melancholy.

He returned home, found the usual party engaged in playing *mouche*, and sat by his mother all the evening. The curé, the Chevalier du Halga, and Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel all knew of Madame de Rochefide's departure,

and were all glad. Calyste would now come back to them, and they all watched, almost by stealth, seeing that he was silent. Nobody in that old house could conceive of all that this death of a first love must be to a heart as true and artless as Calyste's.

For some days Calyste went regularly to les Touches; he would wander round the grass-plot where he had sometimes walked arm in arm with Béatrix. He often went as far as le Croisic, and climbed the rock whence he had tried to throw her into the sea; he would sit for hours leaning on the box-shrub, for by examining the projections on the riven rock he had learned to climb up and down the face of it. His solitary expeditions, his silence, and his lack of appetite at last made his mother uneasy. At the end of a fortnight, while these proceedings lasted—a good deal like those of an animal in its cage, and the despairing lover's cage was, to adopt la Fontaine's phrase, "the spots honored by the footstep, illuminated by the eyes" of Béatrix—Calyste could no longer cross the little inlet; he had only strength enough to drag himself as far on the Guérande road as the spot whence he had seen Béatrix at the window.

The family, glad at the departing of "the Parisians," to use the provincial phrase, discerned nothing ominous or sickly in Calyste. The two old maids and the curé, following up their plan, had kept Charlotte de Kergarouet, who, in the evening, made eyes at Calyste, and got nothing in return but advice as to her game of *mouche*. All through the evening Calyste would sit between his mother and his provincial fiancée, under the eye of the curé and of Charlotte's aunt, who, on their way home, would comment on his greater or less dejection. They took the unhappy boy's indifference for acquiescence in their plans.

One evening, when Calyste, being tired, had gone early to bed, the players all left their cards on the table, and looked at each other as the young man shut his bedroom door. They had listened anxiously to his footsteps.

"Something ails Calyste," said the Baroness, wiping her eyes.

"There is nothing the matter with him," replied Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel; "we must get him married as soon as may be."

"Do you think that will divert him?" said the Chevalier.

Charlotte looked sternly at Monsieur du Halga, whom she thought in very bad taste this evening, immoral, depraved, irreligious, and quite ridiculous with his dog, in spite of her aunt, who always took the old sailor's part.

"To-morrow morning I will lecture Calyste," said the Baron, whom they had thought asleep; "I do not want to go out of this world without having seen my grandson, a little pink-and-white du Guénic, with a Breton hood on in his cradle."

"He never speaks a word," said old Zéphirine, "no one knows what ails him; he never ate less in his life; what does he live on? If he eats at les Touches, the devil's cookery does him no good."

"He is in love," said the Chevalier, proffering this opinion with extreme timidity.

"Now, then, old dotard, you have not put into the pool," said Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel. "When you are thinking of your young days, you forget everything else."

"Come to breakfast with us to-morrow morning," said old Zéphirine to Charlotte and Jacqueline; "my brother will talk to his son, and we will settle everything. One nail drives out another."

"Not in a Breton," said the Chevalier.

The next morning Calyste saw Charlotte arrive, dressed with unusual care though it was still early, just as his father had ended giving him, in the dining-room, a discourse on matrimony, to which the lad could find nothing to say. He knew how ignorant his aunt, his father, and his mother were, and all their friends; he was gathering the fruits of knowledge; he found himself isolated, no longer speaking the language of the household. So he only begged a few days'

respite, and his father rubbed his hands with joy, and gave new life to the Baroness by whispering the good news in her ear.

Breakfast was a cheerful meal. Charlotte, to whom the Baron had given a wink, was in high spirits. A rumor filtered through Gasselin, by which all the town knew that the du Guénics and the Kergarouets had come to an understanding. After breakfast Calyste went out of the hall by the steps on the garden side, and was followed by Charlotte; he offered her his arm, and led her to the arbor at the bottom of the garden. The old folk, standing at the window, looked at them with a sort of pathos. Charlotte looked back at the pretty house, somewhat uneasy at her companion's silence, and took advantage of their presence to begin the conversation by saying to Calyste, "They are watching us!"

"They cannot hear us," he replied.

"No, but they can see us."

"Let us sit down," said Calyste gently, as he took her hand.

"Is it true that your banner once floated from that twisted pillar?" asked Charlotte, looking at the house as if it were her own. "It would look well there!—How happy one might be here! You will make some alterations in the arrangement of your house, will you not, Calyste?"

"I shall have no time for it, my dear Charlotte," said the young man, taking her hands and kissing them. "I will tell you my secret. I love a woman whom you have seen, and who loves me—love her too well to make any other woman happy; and I know that from our infancy you and I have always been intended to marry."

"But she is married, Calyste," said Charlotte.

"I will wait," said the boy.

"And so will I," said Charlotte, her eyes full of tears. "You cannot love that woman for long; she has gone off with a singer, they say . . ."

"Marry some one else, my dear Charlotte," said Calyste. "With such a fortune as your aunt has to leave you, which

is enormous in Brittany, you can find a better match than I. You will find a man with a title.—I have not brought you out here to tell you what you already know, but to entreat you in the name of our long friendship to take the matter upon yourself and to refuse me. Say that you can have nothing to say to a man whose heart is not free, and my passion will at least have been so far serviceable that I shall have done you no wrong. You cannot think how life weighs upon me! I cannot endure any struggle, I am as weak as a body deserted by its soul, by the very element of life. But for the grief that my death would be to my mother and my aunt, I should have thrown myself into the sea ere now, and I have never gone to the rocks of le Croisic since the day when the temptation began to be irresistible.—Say nothing of this.—Charlotte, farewell."

He took the girl's head in his hands, kissed her hair, went out by the path under the gable, and made his escape to Camille's, where he remained till midnight.

On returning at about one in the morning, he found his mother busy with her tapestry, waiting for him. He crept in softly, took her hand, and asked: "Is Charlotte gone?"

"She is going to-morrow with her aunt; they are both in despair.—Come to Ireland, my Calyste," she added.

"How many times have I dreamed of flying thither!" said he.

"Really!" exclaimed the Baroness.

"With Béatrix," he added.

Some days after Charlotte's departure, Calyste was walking with the Chevalier du Halga on the Mall, and he sat down in the sun on a bench whence his eye could command the whole landscape, from the weather-cocks of les Touches to the shoals marked out by the foaming breakers which dance above the reefs at high tide. Calyste was thin and pale, his strength was diminishing, he was beginning to have little periodical shivering fits, symptomatic of fever. His eyes, with dark marks round them, had the hard glitter which a fixed idea will give to lonely persons, or which the

ardor of the struggle imparts to the bold leaders of the civilization of our age. The Chevalier was the only person with whom he sometimes exchanged his ideas; he had discerned in this old man an apostle of his religion, and found in him the traces of a never-dying love.

"Have you loved many women in your life?" he asked, the second time that he and the old navy man sailed in company, as the Captain called it, up and down the Mall.

"Only one," said the Captain.

"Was she free?"

"No," said the Chevalier. "Ah, I suffered much! She was my best friend's wife—my patron's, my chief's; but we loved each other so much!"

"She loved you, then?"

"Passionately," replied du Halga with unwonted vehemence.

"And you were happy?"

"Till her death. She died at the age of forty-nine, an émigrée at St. Petersburg; the climate killed her. She must be very cold in her coffin! I have often thought of going to bring her away and lay her in our beloved Brittany, near me! But she rests in my heart!"

The Chevalier wiped his eyes; Calyste took his hands and pressed them.

"I cling to that dog more than to my life," said he, pointing to Thisbe. "That little creature is in every particular exactly like the dog she used to fondle with her beautiful hands, and to take on her knees. I never look at Thisbe without seeing Madame de Kergarouet's hands."

"Have you seen Madame de Rochefide?" asked Calyste.

"No," replied du Halga. "It is fifty-eight years now since I looked at a woman, excepting your mother; there is something in her coloring that is like the admiral's wife."

Three days later the Chevalier said to Calyste as they met on the Mall: "My boy, all I have in the world is a hundred and eighty louis. When you know where to find Madame de Rochefide, come and ask me for them, to go to see her."

Calyste thanked the old man, whose life he envied. But day by day he became more morose; he seemed to care for no one; he was gentle and kind only to his mother. The Baroness watched the progress of this mania with increasing anxiety; she alone, by much entreaty, could persuade Calyste to take some nourishment.

By the beginning of October the young fellow could no longer walk on the Mall with the Chevalier, who came in vain to ask him out with an old man's attempts at coaxing.

"We will talk about Madame de Rochefide," said he. "I will tell you the history of my first adventure.—Your son is very ill," said he to the Baroness, on the day when his urgency proved useless.

Calyste replied to all who questioned him that he was perfectly well, and, like all melancholy youths, relished the notion of death; but he never left the house now; he sat in the garden on the seat, warming himself in the pale, mild autumn sunshine, alone with his thoughts, and avoiding all company.

After the day when Calyste no longer went to call on her, Félicité begged the curé of Guérande to go to see her. The Abbé Grimont's regularity in going to les Touches almost every morning, and dining there from time to time, became the news of the moment; it was talked of in all the neighborhood, and even at Nantes. However, he never missed spending the evening at Guérande, where despair reigned. Masters and servants, all were grieved by Calyste's obstinacy, though they did not think him in any danger. It never occurred to any one of these good people that the poor youth could die of love. The Chevalier had no record of such a death in all his travels or reminiscences. Everybody ascribed Calyste's emaciation to want of nutrition. His mother would go on her knees to beseech him to eat. To please her, Calyste tried to overcome his repugnance, and the food thus taken against his will added to the low fever that was consuming the handsome boy.

At the end of October the beloved son no longer went up to his room on the second floor; he had his bed brought down into the sitting-room, and lay there generally, in the midst of the family, who at last sent for the Guérande doctor.

The medical man tried to check the fever by quinine, and for a few days it yielded to the treatment. The doctor also ordered Calyste to take exercise, and to amuse himself. The Baron rallied his strength, and shook off his torpor; he grew young as his son grew old. He took out Calyste, Gasselin, and the two fine sporting dogs. Calyste obeyed his father, and for a few days the three men went out together; they went through the forest and visited their friends in neighboring chateaux; but Calyste had no spirit, no one could beguile him of a smile, his pale rigid face revealed a perfectly passive creature.

The Baron, broken by fatigue, fell into a state of collapse, and was forced to come home, bringing Calyste with him in the same condition. Within a few days both father and son were so ill that, at the request of the Guérande doctor himself, the two first physicians of Nantes were called in. The Baron had been quite knocked over by the visible alteration in Calyste. With the terrible prescience that nature bestows on the dying, he trembled like a child at the thought that his family would be extinct; he said nothing, he only clasped his hands, praying as he sat in his chair, to which he was tied by weakness. He sat facing the bed occupied by Calyste, and watched him constantly. At his child's slightest movement he was greatly agitated, as if the flame of his life were fluttered by it.

The Baroness never left the room, and old Zéphirine sat knitting by the fire in a state of agonizing anxiety. She was constantly being asked for wood, for the father and son both felt the cold, and her stores were invaded. She had made up her mind to give up her keys, for she was no longer brisk enough to go with Mariotte; but she insisted on knowing everything; every minute she questioned Mariotte or her

sister-in-law, and would take them aside to hear about the state of her brother and nephew.

One evening, when Calyste and his father were dozing, old Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel remarked that they would no doubt have to resign themselves to losing the Baron, whose face was quite white, and had assumed a waxen look. Mademoiselle du Guénic dropped her knitting, fumbled in her pocket, and pulled out an old rosary of black wooden beads, which she proceeded to tell with a fervency that gave such a glory of energy to her ancient parched features that the other old maid followed her example; and then, at a sign from the curé, they all united in the silent exaltation of the old blind lady.

"I was the first to pray to God," said the Baroness, remembering the fateful letter written by Calyste, "but He did not hear me!"

"Perhaps," said the Abbé Grimont, "we should be wise to beg Mademoiselle des Touches to come to see Calyste."

"She!" cried old Zéphirine, "the author of all our woes, she who lured him away from his family, who tore him from us, who made him read impious books, who taught him the language of heresy! Curse her, and may God never forgive her! She has crushed the du Guénics!"

"She may perhaps raise them up again," said the curé in a mild voice. "She is a saintly and virtuous woman: I am her warranty. She has none but good intentions as regards Calyste. May she be able to realize them!"

"Give me notice the day she is to set foot here, and I will go out," cried the old lady. "She has killed both father and son. Do you suppose I cannot hear how weak Calyste's voice is?—he hardly has strength to speak."

Just then the three physicians came in. They wearied Calyste with questions. As to his father, their examination was brief; they knew all in a moment; the only wonder was that he still lived. The Guérande doctor quietly explained to the Baroness that it would probably be necessary to take Calyste to Paris to consult the most eminent authorities, for

that it would cost more than a hundred louis to bring them to Guérande.

"A man must die of something, but love is nothing," said Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel.

"Alas, whatever the cause may be, Calyste is dying," said his mother. "I recognize every symptom of consumption, the most horrible malady of my native land."

"Calyste is dying?" said the Baron, opening his eyes, whence trickled two large tears which, caught in the many furrows of his face, slowly fell to the bottom of his cheeks—the only tears, no doubt, that he had ever shed in his life.

He dragged himself on to his feet, shuffled to his son's bed, took his hands, and looked at him.

"What do you want, father?" said the boy.

"I want you to live!" cried the Baron.

"I cannot live without Béatrix," said Calyste to the old man, who sank back into his chair.

"Where can I find a hundred louis to fetch the doctors from Paris?" cried the Baroness. "We have yet time."

"A hundred louis!" exclaimed Zéphirine. "Will they save him?"

Without waiting for her sister-in-law's reply, the old woman put her hands into her pocket-holes and untied an under petticoat, which fell with a heavy sound. She knew so well where she had sewn in her louis, that she ripped them out with a rapidity that seemed magical. The gold pieces rang as they dropped one by one. Old Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel looked on with stupefied amazement.

"They can see you!" she whispered in her friend's ear.

"Thirty-seven," said Zéphirine, counting the gold.

"Every one will know how much you have."

"Forty-two."

"Double louis, and all new! how did you get them, you who cannot see them?"

"I could feel them.—Here are a hundred and four louis," cried Zéphirine. "Is that enough?"

"What are you doing?" asked the Chevalier du Halga,

coming in, and unable to imagine what was the meaning of the old lady's holding out her lap full of louis d'or.

Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel explained the case in two words.

"I had heard of it," said he, "and I came to bring you a hundred and forty louis I had kept at Calyste's service, as he knows."

The Chevalier took out of his pocket two rolls of coin, which he showed them. Mariotte, seeing all these riches, bid Gasselin lock the door.

"Gold will not restore him to health," said the Baroness, in tears.

"But it may enable him to run after his Marquise," said du Halga. "Come, Calyste!"

Calyste sat up in bed, and exclaimed gleefully: "Let us be off!"

"Then he will live," said the Baron, in a stricken voice, "and I may die.—Go and fetch the curé."

These words struck them all with terror. Calyste, seeing his father turn ghastly pale from the painful agitation of this scene, could not restrain his tears. The curé, who knew the decision the doctors had come to, had gone off to fetch Mademoiselle des Touches; for at this moment he displayed as much admiration for her as he had not long since felt repugnance, and could defend her as a pastor defends one of the favorites of his flock.

On hearing of the Baron's desperate extremity, a crowd gathered in the little street; the peasants, the marshmen, and the townsfolk all kneeling in the courtyard, while the priest administered the last sacrament to the old Breton warrior. Everybody was deeply touched to think of the father dying by the bed of his sick son. The extinction of the old family was regarded as a public calamity.

The ceremony struck Calyste; for a while his grief silenced his passion. All through the death struggles of this heroic defender of the Monarchy he remained on his knees, watching the approach of death, and weeping.

The old man died in his chair, in the presence of the assembled family.

"I die faithful to the King and religion. Great God, as the reward of my efforts, let Calyste live!" he said.

"I will live, father, and obey you," replied his son.

"If you would make my death as easy as Fanny has made my life, swear that you will marry."

"I promise it, father."

It was touching to see Calyste, or rather his ghost, leaning on the old Chevalier, a spectre leading a shade, following the Baron's bier as chief mourner. The church and the little square before the porch were full of people, who had come from ten leagues round.

The Baroness and Zéphirine were deeply grieved when they saw that, in spite of his efforts to obey his father, Calyste was still sunk in an ominous stupor. On the first day of their mourning the Baroness led her son to the seat at the bottom of the garden and questioned him. Calyste replied with gentle submissiveness, but his answers were heart-breaking.

"Mother," said he, "there is no life left in me; what I eat does not nourish me, the air I breathe into my lungs does not renew my blood; the sun seems cold to me, and when it shines for you on the front of the house as at this moment, where you see carvings bathed in light I see dim forms wrapped in mist. If Béatrix were here, all would be bright once more. There is but one thing in the world that has her color and form—this flower and these leaves," and he drew out of his bosom the withered blossoms that the Marquise had given him. The Baroness dared ask him no more; the madness betrayed by his replies seemed worse than the sorrow of his silence.

But Calyste was thrilled as he caught sight of Mademoiselle des Touches through the windows at opposite ends of the room. Félicité reminded him of Béatrix. Thus it was to her that the two women owed the one gleam of joy that lightened their griefs.

"Well, Calyste," said Mademoiselle des Touches, when she saw him, "the carriage is ready; we will go together and find Béatrix. Come."

The pale, thin face of the boy, all in black, was brightened by a flush, and a smile dawned on his features.

"We will save him!" said Mademoiselle des Touches to the mother, who wrung her hand, shedding tears of joy.

A week after the Baron's death, Mademoiselle des Touches, the Baronne de Guénic, and Calyste set out for Paris, leaving the business matters in the hands of old Mademoiselle.

Félicité's affection for Calyste had planned a brilliant future for the poor boy. She was connected with the Grandlieus, and the ducal branch was ending in a family of five daughters. She had written to the Duchesse de Grandlieu, telling her the whole story of Calyste, and announcing her intention of selling her house in the Rue du Mont-Blanc, for which a company of speculators had offered two million five hundred thousand francs. Her business manager had already bought for her one of the finest houses in the Rue de Bourbon, at a cost of seven hundred thousand francs. Out of the surplus money from the sale of the house in the Rue Mont-Blanc she meant to devote one million to repurchasing the estates of the du Guénics, and would leave the rest of her fortune among the five de Grandlieu girls.

Félicité knew the plans made by the Duke and Duchess, who intended that their youngest daughter should marry the Vicomte de Grandlieu, the heir to their titles; Clotilde-Frédérique, the second, meant, she knew, to remain unmarried, without taking the veil, however, as her elder sister had done; so the only one to be disposed of was Sabine, a pretty creature just twenty years of age, on whom she counted to cure Calyste of his passion for Madame de Rochefide.

During their journey Félicité told Madame du Guénic of all these plans. The house in the Rue de Bourbon was

now being furnished, and in it Calyste was to live if these schemes should succeed.

They all three went straight to the Hôtel Grandlieu, where the Baroness was received with all the respect due to her name as a girl and as a wife. Mademoiselle des Touches, of course, advised Calyste to see all he could of Paris while she made inquiries as to where Béatrix might be, and she left him to the fascinations of every kind which awaited him there. The Duchess, her daughters, and their friends did the honors of the capital for Calyste just at the season when it was beginning to be gayest.

The bustle of Paris entirely diverted the young Breton's mind. He fancied there was some likeness in the minds of Madame de Rochefide and Sabine de Grandlieu, who at that time was certainly one of the loveliest and most charming girls in Paris society, and he thenceforward paid an amount of attention to her advances which no other woman would have won from him. Sabine de Grandlieu played her part all the more successfully because she liked Calyste.

Matters were so skilfully managed that in the course of the winter of 1837 the young Baron, who had recovered his color and youthful beauty, could listen without disgust when his mother reminded him of his promise to his dying father, and spoke of his marrying Sabine de Grandlieu. Still, while keeping his promise, he concealed an indifference which the Baroness could discern, while she hoped it might be dispelled by the satisfactions of a happy home.

On the day when the Grandlieu family and the Baroness, supported on this occasion by her relations from England, held a sitting in the large drawing-room of the Duke's house, while Leopold Hannequin, the family notary, explained the condition of the marriage contract before reading it through, Calyste, whose brow was clouded, as all could see, refused pointblank to accept the benefactions offered to him by Mademoiselle des Touches. He still trusted to Félicité's devotion, and believed that she was seeking Béatrix.

At this moment, in the midst of the dismay of both families, Sabine came in, dressed so as to remind Calyste of the Marquise de Rochefide, though her complexion was dark, and she placed in Calyste's hand the following letter:

*Camille to Calyste*

"Calyste, before retiring into my cell as a novice, I may be allowed to glance back at the world I am quitting to enter the world of prayer. This glance is solely for you, who in these later days have been all the world to me. My voice will reach you, if I have calculated exactly, in the middle of a ceremony which I could not possibly witness. On the day when you stand before the altar, to give your hand to a young and lovely girl who is free to love before Heaven and the world, I shall be in a religious house at Nantes—before the altar too, but plighted forever to Him who can never deceive nor disappoint.

"I write, not to sadden you, but to beseech you not to allow any false delicacy to hinder the good I have always wished to do you since our first meeting. Do not deny the right I have so hardly earned. If love is suffering then I have loved you well, Calyste; but you need feel no remorse. The only pleasures I have known in my life I owe to you, and the pain has come from myself. Compensate me for all this past suffering by giving me one eternal joy. Let me, dear, be in some sort a perfume in the flowers of your life, and mingle with it always without being importunate. I shall certainly owe to you my happiness in life eternal; will you not let me pay my debt by the offering of some transient and perishable possessions? You will not fail in generosity? You will not regard this as the last subterfuge of scorned love?

"Calyste, the world was nothing to me without you; you made it a fearful desert, and you have led the infidel Camille Maupin, the writer of books and dramas, which I shall solemnly disown—you have led that audacious and perverted woman, tied hand and foot, to the throne of

God. I am now, what I ought always to have been, an innocent child. Yes, I have washed my robes in the tears of repentance, and I may go to the altar presented by an angel—by my dearly-loved Calyste! How sweet it is to call you so—now that my resolution has sanctified the word. I love you without self-interest, as a mother loves her son, as the Church loves her children. I can pray for you and yours without the infusion of a single desire but that for your happiness.

"If you knew the supreme peace in which I live after having lifted myself by thought above the petty interests of the world, and how exquisite is the feeling of having done one's duty, in accordance with your noble motto, you would enter on your happy life with a firm step, nor glance behind nor around you. So I am writing to beseech you to be true to yourself and to your family.

"My dear, the society in which you must live cannot exist without the religion of duty; and you will misunderstand life, as I have misunderstood it, if you give yourself up to passion and to fancy as I have done. Woman can only be equal with man by making her life a perpetual sacrifice, as man's must be perpetual action. Now my life has been, as it were, one long outbreak of egoism. God perhaps brought you in its evening to my door, as a messenger charged with my punishment and pardon. Remember this confession from a woman to whom fame was a pharos whose light showed her the right way. Be great! sacrifice your fancy to your duties as the head of a house, as husband and father. Raise the downtrodden banner of the old du Guénics; show the present age, when principles and religion are denied, what a gentleman may be in all his glory and distinction.

"Dear child of my soul, let me play the mother a little: the angelic Fanny will not be jealous of a woman dead to the world, of whom you will henceforth know nothing but that her hands are always raised to Heaven. In these days the nobility need fortune more than ever, so accept a part

of mine, dear Calyste, and make a good use of it. It is not a gift; it is trust-money. I am thinking more of your children and your old Breton estate than of yourself when I offer you the interest which time has accumulated for me on my Paris property."

"I am ready to sign," said the young Baron, to the great delight of the assembly.

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## PART III

### RETROSPECTIVE ADULTERY

*THE WEEK* after this, when the marriage service had been celebrated at Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, at seven in the morning—as was the custom in some families of the Faubourg Saint-Germain—Calyste and Sabine got into a neat travelling-carriage in the midst of the embracing, congratulations, and tears of a score of persons gathered in groups under the awning of the Hotel de Grandlieu. The congratulations were offered by the witnesses and the men; the tears were to be seen in the eyes of the Duchesse de Grandlieu and her daughter Clotilde—both tremulous, and from the same reflection.

"Poor Sabine! she is starting in life at the mercy of a man who is married not altogether willingly."

Marriage does not consist solely of pleasures, which are as fugitive under those conditions as under any others; it involves a consonance of tempers and physical sympathies, a concord of character, which make this social necessity an ever new problem. Girls to be married know the conditions and dangers of this lottery fully as well as their mothers do; this is why women shed tears as they look on at a marriage, while men smile; the men think they risk nothing; the women know pretty well how much they risk.

In another carriage, which had started first, was the

Baronne du Guénic, to whom the Duchess had said at parting:

"You are a mother though you have only a son. Try to fill my place to my darling Sabine."

On the box of that carriage sat a groom serving as a courier, and behind it two ladies'-maids. The four postilions, in splendid liveries—each carriage having four horses —all had nosegays in their buttonholes and favors in their hats. The Duc de Grandlieu, even by paying them, had the greatest difficulty in persuading them to remove the ribbons. The French postilion is eminently intelligent, but he loves his joke; and these took the money, and replaced the favors outside the city walls.

"Well, well, good-by, Sabine!" said the Duchess. "Remember your promise, and write often.—Calyste, I say no more, but you understand me."

Clotilde, leaning on the arm of her younger sister Athénais, who was smiling at the Vicomte Juste de Grandlieu, gave the bride a keen glance through her tears, and watched the carriage till it disappeared amid the repeated salvos of four postilions' whips, noisier than pistol shots. In a very short time the gay procession reached the Esplanade of the Invalides, followed the Quay to the Pont d'Iéna, the Passy Gate, the Versailles avenue, and, finally, the highroad to Brittany.

Is it not strange, to say the least, that the artisan class of Switzerland and Germany, and the greatest families of France and England, obey the same custom, and start on a journey after the nuptial ceremony? The rich pack themselves into a box on wheels. The poor walk gayly along the roads, resting in the woods, feeding at every inn, so long as their glee, or rather their money, holds out. A moralist would find it difficult to decide which is the finest flower of modesty—that which hides from the public eye, inaugurating the domestic hearth and bed as the worthy citizen does, or that which flies from the family and displays itself in the fierce light of the highroad to the eyes

of strangers? Refined natures must crave for solitude, and avoid the world and the family alike. The rush of love that begins a marriage is a diamond, a pearl, a gem cut by the highest of all arts, a treasure to be buried deep in the heart.

Who could tell the tale of a honeymoon excepting the bride? And how many women would here admit that this period of uncertain duration—sometimes of only a single night—is the preface to married life? Sabine's first three letters to her mother betrayed a state of things which, unfortunately, will not seem new to some young wives, nor to many old women. All who have become sick-nurses, so to speak, to a man's heart have not found it out so quickly as Sabine did. But the girls of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, when they are keen-witted, are women already in mind. Before marriage, they have received the baptism of fine manners from the world and from their mothers. Duchesses, anxious to perpetuate the tradition, are often unaware of all the bearings of their lessons when they say to their daughters—"No one ever does that."—"Do not laugh at such things."—"You must never fling yourself on a sofa, you must sit down quietly."—"Never do such a thing again."—"It is most incorrect, my dear!" and so forth.

And critical middle-class folk refuse to recognize any innocence or virtue in young creatures who, like Sabine, are virgin souls, but perfected by cleverness, by the habits of good style, and good taste, knowing from the age of sixteen how to use an opera-glass. Sabine, to lend herself to Mademoiselle des Touches' schemes for her marriage, could not but be of the school of Mademoiselle de Chaulieu. This innate mother-wit, these gifts of birth, may perhaps make this young wife as interesting as the heroine of the "Mémoires de deux jeunes Mariées," in which we see the vanity of such social advantages in the great crises of married life, where they are often crushed under the double weight of unhappiness and passion.

# I

## *To Madame la Duchesse de Grandlieu*

"GUÉRANDE, *April, 1838.*

"DEAR MOTHER—You can easily understand why I did not write to you on the journey; one's mind turns like the wheels. So here I have been these two days in the depths of Brittany, at the Hotel du Guénic, a house carved all over like a cocoanut box. Notwithstanding the affectionate attentions of Calyste's family, I feel an eager longing to fly away to you, and tell you a thousand things which I feel can only be told to a mother.

"Dear mamma, Calyste married me cherishing a great sorrow in his soul; we all of us knew it, and you did not disguise the difficulties of my position; but, alas! they are greater than you imagined. Oh, dear mamma, how much experience we may acquire in a few days—why should I not say to you in a few hours? All your counsels proved useless, and you will understand why by this simple fact: I love Calyste as if he were not my husband. That is to say, if I were married to another man and were travelling with Calyste, I should love him and hate my husband. Consider him, then, as a man loved entirely, involuntarily, absolutely, and as many more adverbs as you choose to supply. So, in spite of your warnings, my slavery is an established fact.

"You advised me to keep myself lofty, haughty, dignified, and proud, in order to bring Calyste to a state of feeling which should never undergo any change throughout life; in the esteem and respect which must sanctify the wife in the home and family. You spoke warmly, and with reason no doubt, against the young women of the day who, under the excuse of living on good terms with their husbands, begin by being docile, obliging, submissive, with a familiarity, a free-and-easyness which are, in your opinion, rather too *cheap*—a word I own to not un-

derstanding yet, but we shall see by and by—and which, if you are right, are only the early and rapid stages toward indifference and perhaps contempt.

"'Remember that you are a Grandlieu,' you said in my ear.

"This advice, full of the maternal eloquence of Dedalus, has shared the fate of mythological things. Dear, darling mother, could you believe that I should begin by the catastrophe which, according to you, closes the honeymoon of the young wives of our day?

"When Calyste and I were alone in the carriage, each thought the other as silly as himself, as we both perceived the importance of the first word, the first look; and each, bewildered by the marriage sacrament, sat looking out of a window. It was so preposterous that, as we got near the city gate, Monsieur made me a little speech in a rather broken voice—a speech prepared, no doubt, like all extempore efforts, to which I listened with a beating heart, and which I take the liberty of epitomizing for your benefit.

"'My dear Sabine,' said he, 'I wish you to be happy, and, above all, to be happy in your own way. In our position, instead of deceiving each other as to our characters and sentiments by magnanimous concessions, let us both be now what we should be a few years hence. Regard me as being your brother, as I would wish to find a sister in you.'

"Though this was most delicately meant, I did not find in this first speech of married love anything answering to the eagerness of my soul, and, after replying that I felt quite as he did, I remained pensive. After this declaration of rights to be equally cold, we talked of the weather, the dust, the houses, and the scenery with the most gracious politeness, I laughing a rather forced laugh, he lost in dreams.

"Finally, as we left Versailles, I asked Calyste point-blank—calling him 'my dear Calyste,' as he called me 'my dear Sabine'—if he could tell me the history of the events which had brought him to death's door, and to which I

owed the honor of being his wife. He hesitated for a long time. In fact, it was the subject of a little discussion lasting through three stages; I trying to play the part of a wilful girl determined to sulk; he debating with himself on the ominous question asked as a challenge to Charles X. by the public press: 'Will the King give in?' At last, when we had left Verneuil, and after swearing often enough to satisfy three dynasties that I would never remind him of his folly, never treat him coldly, and so on, he painted his passion for Madame de Rochefide: 'I do not wish,' he said, in conclusion, 'that there should be any secrets between us.'

"Poor dear Calyste did not know, I suppose, that his friend Mademoiselle des Touches and you had been obliged to tell me all; for a girl cannot be dressed as I was on the day of the contract without being taught her part.

"I cannot but tell everything to so good a mother as you are. Well, then, I was deeply hurt at seeing that he had yielded far less to my request than to his own wish to talk about the unknown object of his passion. Will you blame me, dearest mother, for having wanted to know the extent of this sorrow, of the aching wound in his heart of which you had told me?

"Thus, within eight hours of having been blessed by the Curé of Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, your Sabine found herself in the rather false position of a young wife hearing from her husband's own lips his confidences as to a cheated passion and the misdeeds of a rival. Yes, I was playing a part in the drama of a young wife, officially informed that she owed her marriage to the disdain of an old beauty!

"By this narrative I gained what I sought. 'What?' you will ask. Oh, my dear mother! on clocks and chimney-carvings I have often enough seen Loves leading each other on, hand in hand, to put the lesson into practice! Calyste ended the romance of his memories with the most vehement protestations that he had entirely got over what he called his madness. Every protest needs a signature. The happy hapless one took my hand, pressed it to his lips, and then

held it for a long time. A declaration followed. This one seemed to me more suitable than the first to our position as man and wife, though our lips did not utter a single word. This happiness I owed to my spirited indignation against the bad taste of a woman so stupid as not to love my handsome and delightful Calyste.

"I am called away to play a game of cards, which I have not yet mastered. I will continue my letter to-morrow. That I should have to leave you just now to make the fifth at a game of *mouche!* Such a thing is impossible anywhere but in the depths of Brittany.

"*May.*

"I resume the tale of my Odyssey. By the third day your children had dropped the ceremonial *vous* and adopted the loverlike *tu.* My mother-in-law, delighted to see us happy, tried to fill your place, dearest mother; and, as is always the case with those who take a part with the idea of effacing past impressions, she is so delightful that she has been almost as much to me as you could be. She, no doubt, guessed how heroic my conduct was; at the beginning of our journey she hid her anxiety too carefully not to betray it by her excessive precaution.

"When I caught sight of the towers of Guérande I said in your son-in-law's ear, 'Have you quite forgotten her?'

"And my husband, now my angel, had perhaps never known the depth of an artless and genuine affection, for that little speech made him almost crazy with joy.

"Unluckily, my desire to make him forget Madame de Rochefide led me too far. How could I help it! I love him, and I am almost Portuguese, for I am like you rather than my father. Calyste accepted everything, as spoiled children do; he is above everything an only son. Between you and me, I will never let my daughter—if I ever should have a daughter—marry an only son. It is quite enough to have to manage one tyrant, and in an only son there are several. And so we exchanged parts; I played the devoted wife. There are dangers in self-devotion to gain an end; it is loss

of dignity. So I have to announce the wreck in me of that semi-virtue; dignity is really no more than a screen set up by pride, behind which we may fume at our ease. How could I help myself, mamma; you were not here, and I looked into a gulf. If I had maintained my dignity, I should have known the chill pangs of a sort of brotherliness, which would certainly have become simple indifference. And what future would have lain before me?

"As a result of my devotion, I am Calyste's slave. Shall I get out of that position? We shall see; for the present I like it. I love Calyste—I love him entirely with the frenzy of a mother who thinks everything right that her son can do, even when he punishes her a little.

"*May 15.*

"So far, dear mother, marriage has come to me in a most attractive form. I lavish all my tenderest affection on the handsomest of men, who was thrown over by a fool for the sake of a wretched singer—for the woman is evidently a fool, and a fool in cold blood, the worst sort of fool. I am charitable in my lawful passion, and heal his scars while inflicting eternal wounds on myself. Yes, for the more I love Calyste, the more I feel that I should die of grief if anything put an end to our present happiness. And I am worshipped, too, by all the family, and by the little company that meets at the Hotel du Guénic, all of them born figures in some ancient tapestry, and having stepped out of it to show that the impossible can exist. One day when I am alone I will describe them to you—Aunt Zéphirine, Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel, the Chevalier du Halga, the Demoiselles de Kergarouet, and the rest, down to the two servants, whom I shall be allowed, I hope, to take to Paris—Mariotte and Gasselin, who regard me as an angel alighted on earth from heaven, and who are still startled when I speak to them—they are all figures to put under glass shades.

"My mother-in-law solemnly installed us in the rooms she and her deceased husband had formerly inhabited. The scene was a touching one. 'I lived all my married life here,'

said she, 'quite happy. May that be a happy omen for you, my dear children!'

"And she has taken Calyste's room. The saintly woman seemed to wish to divest herself of her memories and her admirable life as a wife to endow us with them.

"The Province of Brittany, this town, this family with its antique manners—the whole thing, in spite of the absurdities, which are invisible to any but a mocking Parisian woman, has something indescribably grandiose, even in its details, to be expressed only by the word sacred. The tenants of the vast estates of the du Guénics, repurchased, as you know, by Mademoiselle des Touches—whom we are to visit in the convent—all came out to receive us. These good folk in their holiday dresses, expressing the greatest joy at greeting Calyste as really their master once more, made me understand what Brittany is, and feudality, and old France. It was a festival I will not write about; I will tell you when we meet. The terms of all the leases have been proposed by the tenants themselves, and we are to sign after the tour of inspection we are to make round *our* lands that have been pledged this century and a half. Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel tells us that these yeomen have assessed the returns with an accuracy that Paris folk would not believe in. We are to start three days hence, and ride everywhere.

"On my return I will write again, dear mother; but what can I have to say to you, since my happiness is already complete? So I must write what you know already, namely, how much I love you."

## II

*From the Same to the Same*

"NANTES, *June.*

"After playing the part of the Lady of the Castle, worshipped by her vassals as though the revolutions of 1830 and 1789 had never torn down our banners; after riding through woods, halting at farms, dining at old tables spread with cloths a century old, and groaning under Homeric dishes

served in antediluvian plate; after drinking delicious wine out of goblets like those we see in the hands of conjurers; after salvos fired at dessert, and deafening shouts of 'Vive les du Guénics!' and balls, where the orchestra is a bagpipe, which a man blows at for ten hours on end! and such bouquets! and brides who insist on having our blessing! and healthy fatigue, cured by such sleep as I had never known, and a delicious waking to love as radiant as the sun that shines above us, twinkling on a myriad insects that hum in genuine Breton! Finally, after a grotesque visit to the Castle of du Guénic, where the windows are open gates, and the cows might pasture on the grass grown in the halls; but we have vowed to restore it, and furnish it, so as to come here every year and be hailed by the vassals of the clan, one of whom carried our banner.—Ouf! here I am at Nantes.

"What a day we had when we went to le Guénic! The priest and all the clergy came out to meet us, all crowned with flowers, mother, and blessed us with such joy! The tears come into my eyes as I write about it. And my lordly Calyste played his part as a liege like a figure of Walter Scott's. Monsieur received homage as if we had stepped back into the thirteenth century. I heard girls and women saying, 'What a handsome master we have!' just like the chorus of a comic opera.

"The old folk discussed Calyste's likeness to the du Guénics whom they had known. Oh! Brittany is a noble and sublime country, a land of faith and religion. But progress has an eye on it; bridges and roads are to be made, ideas will invade it, and farewell to the sublime. The peasants will certainly cease to be as free and proud as I saw them when it has been proved to them that they are Calyste's equals, if, indeed, they can be brought to believe it.

"So, after the poetry of this pacific restoration, when we had signed the leases we left that delightful country, flowery and smiling, gloomy and barren by turns, and we came here to kneel before her to whom we owe our good fortune, and

give her thanks. Calyste and I both felt the need to thank the novice of the Visitation. In memory of her he will bear on his shield quarterly the arms of des Touches: *party per pale engrailed or and vert.* He will assume one of the silver eagles as a supporter, and place in its beak the pretty womanly motto, '*Souvièyne-vous.*'—So we went yesterday to the Convent of the Ladies of the Visitation, conducted by the Abbé Grimont, a friend of the Guénic family; he told us that your beloved Félicité, dear mamma, is a saint; indeed, she can be no less to him, since this illustrious conversion has led to his being made vicar-general of the diocese. Mademoiselle des Touches would not see Calyste; she received me alone. I found her a little altered, paler and thinner; she seemed extremely pleased by my visit.

"'Tell Calyste,' said she in a low voice, 'that my not seeing him is a matter of conscience and self-discipline, for I have permission; but I would rather not purchase the happiness of a few minutes with months of suffering! Oh, if you could only know how difficult I find it to answer when I am asked, "What are you thinking about?" The mistress of the novices can never understand the vastness and multiplicity of the ideas which rush through my brain like a whirlwind. Sometimes I see Italy once more, or Paris, with all their display, always with Calyste, who,' she said with the poetic turn you know so well, 'is the sun of my memory. I was too old to be admitted to the Carmelites, so I chose the Order of Saint Francis de Sales, solely because he said, "I will have you bareheaded instead of barefoot!" disapproving of such austerities as only mortify the body. In fact, the head is the sinner. The holy Bishop did well to make his rule stern to the brain and merciless to the will!—This was what I needed, for my mind is the real culprit; it deceived me as to my heart till the age of forty, when, though we are sometimes for a moment forty times happier than younger women, we are sometimes fifty times more wretched.—Well, my child, and are you happy?' she ended by asking me, evidently glad to say no more about herself.

"'You see me in a rapture of love and happiness,' I told her.

"'Calyste is as kind and genuine as he is noble and handsome,' she said gravely. 'You are my heiress; you have, besides my fortune, the twofold ideal of which I dreamed.—I am glad of what I have done,' she added after a pause. 'Now, my child, do not be blinded. You have easily grasped happiness, you had only to put out your hand; now try to keep it. If you had come here merely to carry away the advice of my experience, your journey would be well rewarded. Calyste at this moment is fired by an infection of passion; you did not inspire it. To make your happiness durable, dear child, strive to add this element to the former one. In your own interest and your husband's, try to be capricious, coy, a little severe if necessary. I do not advise a spirit of odious calculation, nor tyranny, but the science of conduct. Between usury and extravagance there is economy. Learn to acquire a certain decent control of your husband.

"'These are the last worldly words I shall ever speak; I have been waiting to say them to you, for my conscience quaked at the notion of having sacrificed you to save Calyste; attach him to you, give him children, let him respect you as their mother.—Finally,' she added in an agitated voice, 'manage that he shall never see Béatrix again!'

"This name was enough to produce a sort of torpor in us both; we remained looking into each other's eyes, exchanging our vague sentiments of uneasiness.

"'Are you going home to Guérande?' she asked.

"'Yes,' said I.

"'Well, never go to les Touches. I was wrong to give you the place.'

"'Why?'

"'Child, les Touches is for you a Bluebeard's cupboard, for there is nothing so dangerous as rousing a sleeping passion.'

"I have given you the substance of our conversation, my dear mother. If Mademoiselle des Touches made me talk,

on the other hand she gave me much to think about—all the more because in the excitement of our travels, and my happiness with my Calyste, I had forgotten the serious matter of which I spoke in my first letter.

"After admiring Nantes, a delightful and splendid city; after going to see, in the Place de Bretagne, the spot where Charette so nobly fell, we arranged to return to Saint-Nazaire down the Loire, since we had already gone from Nantes to Guérande by the road. Public travelling is an invention of the modern monster the Monopole. Two rather pretty women belonging to Nantes were behaving rather noisily on deck, suffering evidently from Kergarouetism—a jest you will understand when I shall have told you what the Kergarouets are. Calyste behaved very well. Like a true gentleman, he did not parade me as his wife. Though pleased by his good taste, like a child with his first drum, I thought this an admirable opportunity for practicing the system recommended by Camille Maupin—for it was certainly not the novice that had spoken to me. I put on a little sulky face, and Calyste was very flatteringly distressed. In reply to his question, whispered in my ear, 'What is the matter?' I answered the truth: 'Nothing whatever.'

"And I could judge at once how little effect the truth has in the first instance. Falsehood is a decisive weapon in cases where rapidity is the only salvation for a woman or an empire. Calyste became very urgent, very anxious. I led him to the fore part of the boat, among a mass of ropes, and there, in a voice full of alarms, if not of tears, I told him all the woes and fears of a woman whose husband happens to be the handsomest of men.

" 'Oh, Calyste!' said I, 'there is one dreadful blot on our marriage. You did not love me; you did not choose me! You did not stand fixed like a statue when you saw me for the first time. My heart, my attachment, my tenderness cry out to you for affection, and some day you will punish me for having been the first to offer the treasure of my pure and involuntary girlish love! I ought to be grudging and

capricious, but I have no strength for it against you.—If that odious woman who scorned you had been in my place now, you would not even have seen those two hideous provincial creatures who would be classed with cattle by the Paris *octroi.*'

"Calyste, my dear mother, had tears in his eyes, and turned away to hide them; he saw la Basse Indre, and ran to desire the captain to put us on shore. No one can hold out against such a response, especially as it was followed by a stay of three hours in a little country inn, where we breakfasted off fresh fish, in a little room such as *genre* painters love, while through the windows came the roar of the ironworks of Indret across the broad waters of the Loire. Seeing the happy result of the experiments of experience, I exclaimed, 'Oh, sweet Félicité!'

"Calyste, who of course knew nothing of the advice I had received, or of the artfulness of my behavior, fell into a delightful punning blunder by replying, 'Never let us forget it!—We will send an artist here to sketch the scene.'

"I laughed, dear mamma!—well, I laughed till Calyste was quite disconcerted and on the point of being angry.

" 'Yes,' said I, 'but there is in my heart a picture of this landscape, of this scene, which nothing can ever efface, and inimitable in its color.'

"Indeed, mother, I find it impossible to give my love the appearance of warfare or hostility. Calyste can do what he likes with me. That tear is, I believe, the first he ever bestowed on me; is it not worth more than a second declaration of a wife's rights? A heartless woman, after the scene on the boat, would have been mistress of the situation; I lost all I had gained. By your system, the more I am a wife, the more I become a sort of prostitute, for I am a coward in happiness; I cannot hold out against a glance from my lord. I do not abandon myself to love; I hug it as a mother clasps her child to her breast for fear of some harm."

## III

### *From the Same to the Same*

"*July*, GUÉRANDE.

"Oh! my dear mother, to be jealous after three months of married life! My heart is indeed full. I feel the deepest hatred and the deepest love.—I am worse than deserted, I am not loved!—Happy am I to have a mother, another heart to which I may cry at my ease.

"To us wives who are still to some extent girls, it is quite enough to be told—'Here, among the keys of your palace, is one all rusty with remembrance; go where you will, enjoy everything, but beware of visiting les Touches' —to make us rush in hot-foot, our eyes full of Eve's curiosity. What a provoking element Mademoiselle des Touches had infused into my love! And why was I forbidden les Touches? What! does such happiness as mine hang on an excursion, on a visit to an old house in Brittany? What have I to fear?—In short, add to Mrs. Bluebeard's reasons the craving that gnaws at every woman's heart to know whether her power is precarious or durable, and you will understand why one day I asked, with an air of indifference: 'What sort of place is les Touches?'

"'Les Touches is your own,' said my adorable mother-in-law.

"'Ah! If only Calyste had never set his foot there!—' said Aunt Zéphirine, shaking her head.

"'He would not now be my husband,' said I.

"'Then you know what happened there?' said my mother-in-law sharply.

"'It is a place of perdition,' said Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel. 'Mademoiselle des Touches committed many sins there, for which she now begs forgiveness of God.'

"'And has it not saved that noble creature's soul, besides making the fortune of the Convent?' cried the Chevalier du Halga. 'The Abbé Grimont tells me that

she has given a hundred thousand francs to the Ladies of the Visitation.'

"'Would you like to go to les Touches?' said the Baroness. 'It is worth seeing.'

"'No, no!' cried I eagerly.

"Now, does not this little scene strike you as taken from some diabolical drama? And it was repeated under a hundred pretences. At last my mother-in-law said:

"'I understand why you should not wish to go to les Touches. You are quite right.'

"Confess, dear mamma, that such a stab, so unintentionally given, would have made you determine that you must know whether your happiness really rested on so frail a basis that it must perish under one particular roof? I must do this justice to Calyste, he had never proposed to visit this retreat which is now his property. Certainly when we love we become bereft of our senses, for his silence and reserve nettled me, till I said one day, 'What are you afraid of seeing at les Touches that you never mention it even?'

"'Let us go there,' said he.

"I was caught, as every woman is who wishes to be caught, and who trusts to chance to cut the Gordian knot of her hesitancy. So we went to les Touches.

"It is a delightful spot, most artistically tasteful, and I revel in the abyss whither Mademoiselle des Touches had warned me never to go. All poison-flowers are beautiful. The devil sows them—for there are flowers of Satan's and flowers from God! We have only to look into our own hearts to see that they went halves in the work of creation.—What bitter-sweet joys I found in this place where I played, not with fire, but with ashes. I watched Calyste; I wanted to know if every spark was dead, and looked out for every chance draught of air, believe me! I noted his face as we went from room to room, from one piece of furniture to another, exactly like children seeking some hidden object. He seemed thoughtful; still, at first I fancied I had

conquered. I felt brave enough to speak of Madame de Rochefide, who, since the adventure of her fall at le Croisic, is called Rocheperfide. Finally, we went to look at the famous box-shrub on which Béatrix was caught when Calyste pushed her into the sea that she might never belong to any man.

"'She must be very light to have rested there!' said I, laughing.

"Calyste said nothing. 'Peace to the dead,' I added.

"Still he was silent. 'Have I vexed you?' I asked.

"'No. But do not galvanize that passion,' he replied.

"What a speech!—Calyste, seeing it had saddened me, was doubly kind and tender to me.

"*August.*

"Alas! I was at the bottom of the pit and amusing myself, like the innocents in a melodrama, with plucking the flowers. Suddenly a horrible idea came galloping across my happiness like the horse in the German ballad. I fancied I could discern that Calyste's love was fed by his reminiscences, that he was wreaking on me the storms I could revive in him, by reminding him of that horrible coquette Béatrix.—That unwholesome, cold, limp, tenacious nature—akin to the mollusk and the coral insect—dares to be called Béatrix!

"So already, dear mother, I am forced to have an eye on a suspicion when my heart is wholly Calyste's, and is it not a terrible misfortune that the eye should get the better of the heart; that the suspicion, in short, has been justified?—And in this way:

"'I love this place,' I said to Calyste one morning, 'for I owe my happiness to it—so I forgive you for sometimes mistaking me for another woman—'

"My loyal Breton colored, and I threw my arms round his neck; but I came away from les Touches, and shall never go back there.

"The depth of my hatred, which makes me long for the death of Madame de Rochefide—oh dear, a natural death,

of course, from a cold or some accident—revealed to me the extent and vehemence of my love for Calyste. This woman has haunted my slumbers; I have seen her in my dreams. —Am I fated to meet her?—Yes, the novice in the Convent was right; les Touches is a fatal spot. Calyste renewed his impressions there, and they are stronger than the pleasures of our love.

"Find out, my dear mother, whether Madame de Rochefide is in Paris; for if so, I shall remain on our estates in Brittany. Poor Mademoiselle des Touches, who is now sorry that she dressed me like Béetrix on the day when our marriage-contract was signed, to carry out her scheme —if she could now know how completely I am a substitute for our odious rival! What would she say? Why, it is prostitution! I am no longer myself! I am put to shame. —I am suffering from a mad desire to flee from Guérande and the sands of le Croisic.

"*August 25.*

"I am quite resolved to return to the ruins of le Guénic. Calyste, uneasy at seeing me so uneasy, is taking me thither. Either he does not know much of the world, or he guesses nothing; or, if he knows the reason of my flight, he does not love me. I am so afraid of discovering the hideous certainty if I seek it, that, like the children, I cover my eyes with my hands not to hear the explosion. Oh, mother! I am not loved with such love as I feel in my own heart. Calyste, to be sure, is charming; but what man short of a monster would not be, like Calyste, amiable and gracious, when he is given all the opening blossoms of the soul of a girl of twenty, brought up by you, pure as I am, and loving, and—as many women have told you—very pretty—"

"Le Guénic, *September 18.*

"Has he forgotten her? This is the one thought which echoes like remorse in my soul. Dear mother, has every wife, like me, some such memory to contend with? Pure girls ought to marry none but innocent youths! And yet,

that is an illusory Utopia; and it is better to have a rival in the past than in the future. Pity me, mamma, though at this moment I am happy; happy as a woman is who fears to lose her happiness and clings to it!—a way of killing it sometimes, says wise Clotilde.

"I perceive that for the last five months I have thought only of myself; that is, of Calyste. Tell my sister Clotilde that the dicta of her melancholy wisdom recur to me sometimes. She is happy in being faithful to the dead; she need fear no rival.

"A kiss to my dear Athénais; I see that Juste is madly in love with her. From what you say in your last letter, all he fears is that he may not win her. Cultivate that fear as a precious flower. Athénais will be mistress; I, who dreaded lest I should not win Calyste from himself, shall be the handmaid. A thousand loves, dearest mother. Indeed, if my fears should not prove vain, I shall have paid very dear for Camille Maupin's fortune. Affectionate respects to my father."

These letters fully explain the secret attitude of this husband and wife. Where Sabine saw a love-match, Calyste saw a *mariage de convenance*. And the joys of the honeymoon had not altogether fulfilled the requirements of the law as to community of goods.

During their stay in Brittany the work of restoring, arranging, and decorating the Hôtel du Guénic in Paris had been carried on by the famous architect Grindot, under the eye of Clotilde and the Duchesse and Duc de Grandlieu. Every step was taken to enable the young couple to return to Paris in December, 1838; and Sabine was glad to settle in the Rue de Bourbon, less for the pleasure of being mistress of the house than to discover what her family thought of her married life. Calyste, handsome and indifferent, readily allowed himself to be guided in matters of fashion by Clotilde and his mother-in-law, who were gratified by his docility. He filled the place in the world to which his

name, his fortune, and his connection entitled him. His wife's success, regarded as she was as one of the most charming women of the year, the amusements of the best society, duties to be done, and the dissipations of a Paris season, somewhat recruited the happiness of the young couple by supplying excitement and interludes. The Duchess and Clotilde believed in Sabine's happiness, ascribing Calyste's cold manners to his English blood, and the young wife got over her gloomy notions; she heard herself envied by so many less happy wives that she banished her terrors to the limbo of bad dreams. Finally, Sabine's prospect of motherhood was the crowning guarantee for the future of this neutral-tinted union, a good augury which women of experience rely on.

In October, 1839, the young Baronne du Guénic had a son, and was so foolish as to nurse him herself, like almost every woman under similar circumstances. How can she help being wholly a mother when her child is the child of a husband so truly idolized? Thus by the end of the following summer Sabine was preparing to wean her first child.

In the course of a two years' residence in Paris, Calyste had entirely shed the innocence which had cast the light of its prestige on his first experience in the world of passion. Calyste, as the comrade of the young Duc de Maufrigneuse —like himself, lately married to an heiress, Berthe de Cinq-Cygne—of the Vicomte Savinien de Portenduère, of the Duc and Duchesse de Rhétoré, the Duc and Duchesse de Lenoncourt-Chaulieu, and all the company that met in his mother-in-law's drawing-room, learned to see the differences that divide provincial from Paris life. Wealth has its dark hours, its tracts of idleness, for which Paris, better than any other capital, can provide amusement, diversion, and interest. Hence, under the influence of these young husbands, who would leave the noblest and most beautiful creatures for the delights of the cigar or of whist, for the sublime conversation at a club or the absorbing interests of the turf, many of the domestic virtues were undermined in the young Breton

husband. The maternal instinct in a woman who cannot endure to bore her husband is always ready to support young married men in their dissipations. A woman is so proud of seeing the man she leaves perfectly free come back to her side.

One evening, in October this year, to escape the cries of a weaned child, Calyste—on whose brow Sabine could not bear to see a cloud—was advised by her to go to the Théâtre des Variétés, where a new piece was being acted. The servant sent to secure a stall had taken one quite near to the stage-boxes. Between the first and second acts, Calyste, looking about him, saw in one of these boxes on the ground tier, not four yards away, Madame de Rochefide.

Béatrix in Paris! Béatrix in public! The two ideas pierced Calyste's brain like two arrows. He could see her again after nearly three years!—Who can describe the commotion in the soul of this lover who, far from forgetting, had sometimes so completely identified Béatrix with his wife that Sabine had been conscious of it? Who can understand how this poem of a lost and misprized love, ever living in the heart of Sabine's husband, overshadowed the young wife's dutiful charms and ineffable tenderness? Béatrix became light, the day-star, excitement, life, the unknown; while Sabine was duty, darkness, the familiar! In that instant one was pleasure, the other satiety. It was a thunderbolt.

Sabine's husband in a loyal impulse felt a noble prompting to leave the house. As he went out from the stalls, the door of the box was open, and in spite of himself his feet carried him in. He found Béatrix between two very distinguished men, Canalis and Nathan—a politician and a literary celebrity. During nearly three years, since Calyste had last seen Madame de Rochefide, she had altered very much; but though the metamorphosis had changed the woman's nature, she seemed all the more poetical and attractive in Calyste's eyes. Up to the age of thirty, clothing is all a pretty Parisian demands of dress; but when she has crossed the threshold of the thirties, she looks to finery for

armor, fascinations, and embellishment; she composes it to lend her graces; she finds a purpose in it, assumes a character, makes herself young again, studies the smallest accessories—in short, abandons nature for art.

Madame de Rochefide had just gone through the changing scenes of the drama which, in this history of the manners of the French in the nineteenth century, is called "The Deserted Woman." Conti having thrown her over, she had naturally become a great artist in dress, in flirtation, and in artificial bloom of every description.

"How is it that Conti is not here?" asked Calyste of Canalis in a whisper, after the commonplace greetings which begin the most momentous meeting when it takes place in public.

The erewhile poet of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, twice minister, and now for the fourth time a speaker hoping for fresh promotion, laid his finger with meaning on his lips. This explained all.

"I am so glad to see you," said Béatrix, in a kittenish way. "I said to myself as soon as I saw you, before you saw me, that you, at any rate, would not disown me! Oh, my Calyste," she murmured in his ear, "why are you married?—and to such a little fool, too!"

As soon as a woman whispers to a new-comer in her box, and makes him sit down by her, men of breeding always find some excuse for leaving them together.

"Are you coming, Nathan?" said Canalis; "Madame la Marquise will excuse me if I go to speak a word to d'Arthez, whom I see with the Princesse de Cadignan. I must talk about a combination of speakers for to-morrow's sitting."

This retreat, effected with good taste, gave Calyste a chance of recovering from the shock he had sustained; but he lost all his remaining strength and presence of mind as he inhaled the, to him, intoxicating and poisonous fragrance of the poem called Béatrix.

Madame de Rochefide, who had grown bony and stringy, whose complexion was almost ruined, thin, faded, with dark

circles round her eyes, had that evening wreathed the untimely ruin with the most ingenious devices of Parisian frippery. Like all deserted women, she had tried to give herself a virgin grace, and by the effect of various white draperies to recall the maidens of Ossian, with names ending in *a*, so poetically represented by Girodet. Her fair hair fell about her long face in bunches of curls, reflecting the flare of the footlights in the sheen of scented oil. Her pale forehead shone; she had applied an imperceptible touch of rouge over the dull whiteness of her skin, bathed in bran-water, and its brilliancy cheated the eye. A scarf, so fine that it was hard to believe that man could have woven it of silk, was wound about her neck so as to diminish its length by hiding it, and barely revealing the treasures enticingly displayed by her stays. The bodice was a masterpiece of art. As to her attitude, it is enough to say that it was well worth the pains she had taken to elaborate it. Her arms, lean and hard, were scarcely visible through the carefully arranged puffs of her wide sleeves. She presented that mixture of false glitter and sheeny silk, of flowing gauze and frizzled hair, of liveliness, coolness, and movement which has been called *je ne sais quoi*. Every one knows what is meant by this *je ne sais quoi*. It is a compound of cleverness, taste, and temperament. Bèatrix was, in fact, a drama, a *spectacle*, all scenery, and transformations, and marvellous machinery.

The performance of these fairy pieces, which are no less brilliant in dialogue, turns the head of a man blessed with honesty; for, by the law of contrast, he feels a frenzied desire to play with the artificial thing. It is false and seductive, elaborate, but pleasing, and there are men who adore these women who play at being charming as one plays a game of cards. This is the reason—man's desire is a syllogism, and argues from this external skill to the secret theorems of voluptuous enjoyment. The mind concludes, though not in words, "A woman who can make herself so attractive must have other resources of passion." And it is true. The women who are deserted are the women who love; the women

who keep their lovers are those who know how to love. Now, though this lesson in Italian had been a hard one for Béatrix's vanity, her nature was too thoroughly artificial not to profit by it.

"It is not a matter of loving you men," she had been saying some minutes before Calyste went in; "we have to worry you when we have got you; that is the secret of keeping you. Dragons who guard treasures are armed with talons and wings!"

"Your idea might be put into a sonnet," Canalis was saying just as Calyste entered the box.

At one glance Béatrix read Calyste's condition; she saw, still fresh and raw, the marks of the collar she had put on him at les Touches. Calyste, offended by her phrase about his wife, hesitated between his dignity as a husband, defending Sabine, and finding a sharp word to cast on the heart whence, for him, rose such fragrant reminiscences—a heart he believed to be yet bleeding. The Marquise discerned this hesitancy; she had spoken thus solely to gauge the extent of her power over Calyste, and, seeing him so weak, she came to his assistance to get him out of his difficulty.

"Well, my friend," said she, when the two courtiers had left, "you see me alone—yes, alone in the world!"

"And you never thought of me?" said Calyste.

"You!" she replied; "are not you married?—It has been one of my great griefs among the many I have endured since we last met. 'Not merely have I lost love,' I said to myself, 'but friendship too, a friendship I believed to be wholly Breton.' We get used to anything. I now suffer less, but I am broken. This is the first time for a long while that I have unburdened my heart. Compelled to be reserved in the presence of indifferent persons, and as arrogant to those who court me as though I had never fallen, and having lost my dear Félicité, I have no ear into which to breathe the words, 'I am wretched!' And even now, can I tell you what my anguish was when I saw you a few yards away from me, not recognizing me; or what my joy is at seeing you close to me.

—Yes," said she, at a movement on Calyste's part, "it is almost fidelity! In this you see what misfortune means! A nothing, a visit, is everything.

"Yes, you really loved me, as I deserved to be loved by the man who has chosen to trample on all the treasures I cast at his feet. And, alas! to my woe, I cannot forget; I love, and I mean to be true to the past, which can never return."

As she poured out this speech, a hundred times rehearsed, she used her eyes in such a way as to double the effect of words which seemed to surge up from her soul with the violence of a long-restrained torrent. Calyste, instead of speaking, let fall the tears that had been gathering in his eyes. Béatrix took his hand and pressed it, making him turn pale.

"Thank you, Calyste; thank you, my poor boy; that is the way a true friend should respond to a friend's sorrow. We understand each other. There, do not add another word! —Go now; if we were seen, you might cause your wife grief if by chance any one told her that we had met—though innocently enough, in the face of a thousand people.—Good-by, I am brave, you see—" And she wiped her eyes by what should be called in feminine rhetoric the antithesis of action.

"Leave me to laugh the laugh of the damned with the people I do not care for, but who amuse me," she went on. "I see artists and writers, the circle I knew at our poor Camille's—she was right, no doubt! Enrich the man you love, and then disappear, saying, 'I am too old for him!' It is to die a martyr. And that is best when one cannot die a virgin."

She laughed, as if to efface the melancholy impression she might have made on her adorer.

"But where can I call on you?" asked Calyste.

"I have hidden myself in the Rue de Courcelles, close to the Parc Monceaux, in a tiny house suited to my fortune, and I cram my brain with literature—but for my own satisfaction only, to amuse myself. Heaven preserve me from the mania of writing!—Go, leave me; I do not want to be

talked about, and what will not people say if they see us together? And besides, Calyste, I tell you, it you stay a minute longer I shall cry, for I can't help it."

Calyste withdrew, after giving his hand to Béatrix, and feeling a second time the deep strange sensation of a pressure on both sides full of suggestive incitement.

"My God! Sabine never stirred my heart like this," was the thought that assailed him in the corridor.

Throughout the rest of the evening the Marquise de Rochefide did not look three times straight at Calyste; but she sent him side glances which rent the soul of the man who had given himself up wholly to his first and rejected love.

When the Baron du Guénic was at home again, the magnificence of his rooms reminded him of the sort of mediocrity to which Béatrix had alluded, and he felt a hatred for the fortune that did not belong to that fallen angel. On hearing that Sabine had been in bed some time, he was happy in having a night to himself to live in his emotions.

He now cursed the perspicacity given to Sabine by her affection. When it happens that a man is adored by his wife, she can read his face like a book, she knows the slightest quiver of his muscles, she divines the reason when he is calm, she questions herself when he is in the least sad, wondering if she is in fault, she watches his eyes; to her those eyes are colored by his ruling thought—they love or they love not. Calyste knew himself to be the object of a worship so complete, so artless, so jealous, that he doubted whether he could assume a countenance that would preserve the secret of the change that had come over him.

"What shall I do to-morrow morning?" said he to himself as he fell asleep, fearing Sabine's scrutiny.

For when they first met, or even in the course of the day, Sabine would ask him, "Do you love me as much as ever?" or, "I don't bore you?" Gracious questionings, varying according to the wife's wit or mood, and covering real or imaginary terrors.

A storm will stir up mud and bring it to the top of the noblest and purest hearts. And so, next morning, Calyste, who was genuinely fond of his child, felt a thrill of joy at hearing that Sabine was anxious as to the cause of some symptoms, and, fearing croup, could not leave the infant Calyste. The Baron excused himself on the score of business from breakfasting at home, and went out. He fled as a prisoner escapes, happy in the mere act of walking, in going across the Pont Louis XVI. and the Champs-Elysées to a café on the Boulevard, where he breakfasted alone.

What is there in love? Does Nature turn restive under the social yoke? Does Nature insist that the spring of a devoted life shall be spontaneous and free, its flow that of a wild torrent tossed by the rocks of contradiction and caprice, instead of a tranquil stream trickling between two banks—the mairie on one side, and the church on the other? Has she schemes of her own when she is hatching those volcanic eruptions to which perhaps we owe our great men?

It would have been difficult to find a young man more piously brought up than Calyste, of purer life, or less tainted by infidelity; and he was rushing toward a woman quite unworthy of him, when a merciful and glorious chance brought to him, in Sabine, a girl of really aristocratic beauty, with a refined and delicate mind, pious, loving, and wholly attached to him; her angelic sweetness still touched with the pathos of love, passionate love in spite of marriage—such love as his for Béatrix.

The greatest men perhaps have still some clay in their composition; the mire still has charms. So, in spite of folly and frailty, the woman would then be the less imperfect creature. Madame de Rochefide in the midst of the crowd of artistic pretenders who surrounded her, and in spite of her fall, belonged to the highest nobility all the same; her nature was ethereal rather than earth-born, and she hid the courtesan she meant to be under the most aristocratic exterior. So this explanation cannot account for Calyste's strange passion.

The reason may perhaps be found in a vanity so deeply buried that moralists have not yet discerned that side of vice. There are men, truly noble as Calyste was, and as handsome, rich, elegant, and well bred, who weary—unconsciously perhaps—of wedded life with a nature like their own; beings whose loftiness is not amazed by loftiness, who are left cold by a dignity and refinement on a constant level with their own, but who crave to find in inferior or fallen natures a corroboration of their own superiority, though they would not ask their praises. The contrast of moral degradation and magnanimity fascinates their sight. What is pure shines so vividly by the side of what is impure! This comparison is pleasing. Calyste found nothing in Sabine to protect; she was irreproachable; all the wasted energies of his heart went forth to Béatrix. And if we have seen great men playing the part of Jesus, raising up the woman taken in adultery, how should commonplace folk be any wiser?

Calyste lived till two o'clock on the thought, "I shall see her again!"—a poem which ere now has proved sustaining during a journey of seven hundred leagues. Then he went with a light step to the Rue de Courcelles; he recognized the house though he had never seen it; and he, the Duc de Grandlieu's son-in-law, he, as rich, as noble as the Bourbons, stood at the foot of the stairs, stopped by the question from an old butler, "Your name if you please, sir?"

Calyste understood that he must leave Madame de Rochefide free to act, and he looked out on the garden and the walls streaked with black and yellow lines left by the rain on the stucco of Paris.

Madame de Rochefide, like most fine ladies when they break their chain, had fled, leaving her fortune in her husband's hands, and she would not appeal for help to her tyrant. Conti and Mademoiselle des Touches had spared Béatrix all the cares of material life, and her mother from time to time sent her a sum of money. Now that she was alone, she was reduced to economy of a rather severe kind to a woman used to luxury. So she had taken herself to the

top of the hill on which lies the Parc Monceaux, sheltering herself in a little old house of some departed magnate, facing the street, but with a charming little garden behind it, at a rent of not more than eighteen hundred francs. And still, with an old manservant, a maid and a cook from Alençon, who had clung to her in her reverses, her poverty would have seemed opulence to many an ambitious middle-class housewife.

Calyste went up a flight of well-whitened stone stairs, the landings gay with flowers. On the first floor the old butler showed Calyste into the rooms through a double door of red velvet panelled with red silk and gilt nails. The rooms he went through were also hung with red silk and velvet. Dark-toned carpets, hangings across the windows and doors, the whole interior was in contrast with the outside, which the owner was at no pains to keep up.

Calyste stood waiting for Béatrix in a drawing-room, quiet in style, where luxury affected simplicity. It was hung with bright crimson velvet set off by cording of dull yellow silk; the carpet was a darker red, the windows looked like conservatories, they were so crowded with flowers, and there was so little daylight that he could scarcely see two vases of fine old red porcelain, and between them a silver cup attributed to Benvenuto Cellini, and brought from Italy by Béatrix. The furniture of gilt wood upholstered with velvet, the handsome consoles, on one of which stood a curious clock, the table covered with a Persian cloth, all bore witness to past wealth, of which the remains were carefully arranged. On a small table Calyste saw some trinkets, and a book half read, in which the place was marked by a dagger—symbolical of criticism—its handle sparkling with jewels. On the walls ten water-color drawings, handsomely framed, all representing bedrooms in the various houses where Béatrix had lived in the course of her wandering life, gave an idea of her supreme impertinence.

The rustle of a silk dress announced the unfortunate lady, who appeared in a studied toilet, which, if Calyste had been

an older hand, would certainly have shown him that he was expected. The dress, made like a dressing-gown to show a triangle of the white throat, was of pearl-gray watered silk with open hanging sleeves, showing the arms covered with an under sleeve made with puffs divided by straps, and with lace ruffles. Her fine hair, loosely fastened with a comb, escaped from under a cap of lace and flowers.

"So soon," said she with a smile. "A lover would not have been so eager. So you have some secrets to tell me, I suppose?" And she seated herself on a sofa, signing to Calyste to take a place by her.

By some chance—not perhaps unintentional, for women have two kinds of memory, that of the angels and that of the devils—Béatrix carried about her the same perfume that she had used at les Touches when she had first met Calyste. The breath of this scent, the touch of that dress, the look of those eyes, which in the twilight seemed to focus and reflect light, all went to Calyste's brain. The unhappy fellow felt the same surge of violence as had already so nearly killed Béatrix; but now the Marquise was on the edge of a divan, not of the ocean; she rose to ring the bell, putting her finger to her lips. At this Calyste, called to order, controlled himself; he understood that Béatrix had no hostile intentions.

"Antoine, I am not at home," said she to the old servant. "Put some wood on the fire.—You see, Calyste, I treat you as a friend," she added with dignity when the old man was gone. "Do not treat me as your mistress.—I have two remarks to make. First, that I should not make any foolish stipulations with a man I loved; next, that I will never belong again to any man in the world. For I believed myself loved, Calyste, by a sort of Rizzio whom no pledges could bind, a man absolutely free, and you see whither that fatal infatuation has brought me.—As for you, you are tied to the most sacred duties; you have a young, amiable, delightful wife; and you are a father. I should be as inexcusable as you are, and we should both be mad—"

"My dear Béatrix, all your logic falls before one word. I have never loved any one on earth but you, and I married in spite of myself."

"A little trick played us by Mademoiselle des Touches," said she with a smile.

For three hours Madame de Rochefide kept Calyste faithful to his conjugal duties by pressing on him the horrible ultimatum of a complete breach with Sabine. Nothing less, she declared, could reassure her in the dreadful position in which she would be placed by Calyste's passion. And, indeed, she thought little of sacrificing Sabine; she knew her so well.

"Why, my dear boy, she is a woman who fulfils all the promise of her girlhood. She is a thorough Grandlieu, as brown as her Portuguese mother, not to say orange-colored, and as dry as her father. To speak the truth, your wife will never be lost to you; she is just a great boy, and can walk alone. Poor Calyste! is this the wife to suit you? She has fine eyes, but such eyes are common in Italy, Spain, and Portugal. Can a woman so lean be really tender? Eve was fair; dark women are descended from Adam, fair women from God, whose hand left a last touch on Eve when all creation was complete."

At about six o'clock Calyste in desperation took up his hat to go.

"Yes, go, my poor friend; do not let her have the disappointment of dining without you."

Calyste stayed. He was so young, so easy to take on the wrong side.

"You would really dare to dine with me?" said Béatrix, affecting the most provoking surprise. "My humble fare does not frighten you away, and you have enough independence of spirit to crown my joy by this little proof of affection?"

"Only let me write a line to Sabine," said he, "for she would wait for me till nine o'clock."

"There is my writing-table," said Béatrix.

She herself lighted the candles, and brought one to the table to see what Calyste would write.

"My dear Sabine."

"My DEAR! Is your wife still dear to you?" said she, looking at him so coldly that it froze the marrow in his bones. "Go, then, go to dine with her."

"I am dining at an eating-house with some friends—"

"That is a lie. For shame! You are unworthy of her love or mine. All men are cowards with us.—That will do, Monsieur; go and dine with your dear Sabine!"

Calyste threw himself back in his armchair and turned paler than death. Bretons have a sort of obstinate courage which makes them hold their own under difficulties. The young Baron sat up again with his elbow firmly set on the table, his chin in his hand, and his sparkling eyes fixed on Béatrix, who was relentless. He looked so fine that a true northern or southern woman would have fallen on her knees, saying, "Take me!" But in Béatrix, born on the border between Normandy and Brittany, of the race of Casteran, desertion had brought out the ferocity of the Frank and the malignity of the Norman; she craved a tremendous and terrible revenge; she did not yield to his noble impulse.

"Dictate what I am to write, and I will obey," said the poor boy. "But then—"

"Then, yes," she replied, "for you will love me then as you loved me at Guérande.—Write, 'I am dining in town; do not wait.'"

"And—?" said Calyste, expecting something more.

"Nothing.—Sign it. Good," she said, seizing this note with covert joy. "I will send it by a messenger."

"Now!" cried Calyste, starting up like a happy man.

"I have preserved my liberty of action, I believe," said she, looking round, and pausing half-way between the table and the fireplace, where she was about to ring.

"Here, Antoine, have this note taken to the address.—Monsieur will dine with me."

Calyste went home at about two in the morning.

After sitting up till half-past twelve, Sabine had gone to bed tired out. She slept, though she had been cruelly startled by the brevity of her husband's note; still, she accounted for it. True love in a woman can always explain everything to the advantage of the man she loves.

"Calyste was in a hurry!" thought she.

Next day the child had recovered, the mother's alarms were past. Sabine came in smiling with little Calyste in her arms to show him to his father just before breakfast, full of the pretty nonsense, and saying the silly things that all young mothers are full of. This little domestic scene enabled Calyste to put a good face on matters, and he was charming to his wife while feeling that he was a wretch. He played like a boy himself with Monsieur le Chevalier; indeed, he overdid it, overacting his part; but Sabine had not reached that pitch of distrust in which a wife notes so subtle a shade.

At last, during breakfast, Sabine asked: "And what were you doing yesterday?"

"Portenduère," said he, "kept me to dinner, and we went to the club to play a few rubbers of whist."

"It is a foolish life, my Calyste," replied Sabine. "The young men of our day ought rather to think of recovering all the estates in the country that their fathers lost. They cannot live by smoking cigars, playing whist, and dissipating their idleness by being content with making impertinent speeches to the parvenus who are ousting them from all their dignities, by cutting themselves off from the masses, whose soul and brain they ought to be, and to whom they should appear as Providence. Instead of being a party, you will only be an opinion, as de Marsay said. Oh! if you could only know how my views have expanded since I have rocked and suckled your child. I want to see the old name of du Guénic figure in history."

Then, suddenly looking straight into Calyste's eyes, which were pensively fixed on her, she said: "You must admit that the first note you ever wrote me was a little abrupt?"

"I never thought of writing till I reached the club."

"But you wrote on a woman's paper; it had some womanly scent."

"The club managers do such queer things—"

The Vicomte de Portenduère and his wife, a charming young couple, had become so intimate with the du Guénics that they shared a box at the Italian opera. The two young women, Sabine and Ursule, had been drawn into this friendship by a delightful exchange of advice, anxieties, and confidences about their babies. While Calyste, a novice in falsehood, was thinking to himself, "I must go to warn Savinien," Sabine was reflecting, "I fancied that the paper was stamped with a coronet!"

The suspicion flashed like lightning through her consciousness, and she blamed herself for it; but she made up her mind to look for the note, which, in the midst of her alarms on the previous day, she had tossed into her letter-box.

After breakfast Calyste went out, telling his wife he should soon return; he got into one of the little low one-horse carriages which were just beginning to take the place of the inconvenient cabriolet of our grandfathers. In a few minutes he reached the Rue des Saints-Pères, where the Vicomte lived, and begged him to do him the little kindness of lying in case Sabine should question the Vicomtesse —he would do as much for him next time. Then, when once out of the house, Calyste, having first bidden the coachman to hurry as much as possible, went in a few minutes from the Rue des Saints-Pères to the Rue de Courcelles. He was anxious to know how Béatrix had spent the rest of the night.

He found the happy victim of fate just out of her bath, fresh, beautified, and breakfasting with a good appetite. He admired the grace with which his angel ate boiled eggs, and was delighted with the service of gold, a present from a music-mad lord for whom Conti had written some songs, on *ideas* supplied by his lordship, who had published them

as his own. Calyste listened to a few piquant anecdotes related by his idol, whose chief aim was to amuse him, though she got angry and cried when he left her. He fancied he had been with her half an hour, and did not get home till three o'clock. His horse, a fine beast given him by the Vicomtesse de Grandlieu, looked as if it had come out of the river, it was so streaming with sweat.

By such a chance as a jealous woman always plans, Sabine was on guard at a window looking out into the courtyard, out of patience at Calyste's late return, and uneasy without knowing why. She was struck by the condition of the horse, its mouth full of foam.

"Where has he been?"

The question was whispered in her ear by that power which is not conscience—not the devil, nor an angel—the power which sees, feels, knows, and shows us the unknown; which makes us believe in the existence of spiritual beings, creatures of our own brain, going and coming, and living in the invisible sphere of ideas.

"Where have you come from, my darling?" said she, going down to the first landing to meet Calyste. "Abd-el-Kader is half dead; you said you would be out but a few minutes, and I have been expecting you these three hours . . ."

"Well, well," said Calyste to himself, improving in the art of dissimulation, "I must get out of the scrape by a present.—Dear little nurse," he said, putting his arm round his wife's waist with a more coaxing pressure than he would have given it if he had not felt guilty, "it is impossible, I see, to keep a secret, however innocent, from a loving wife . . ."

"We don't tell secrets on the stairs," she replied, laughing. "Come along!"

In the middle of the drawing-room that led to the bedroom, she saw, reflected in a mirror, Calyste's face, in which, not knowing that it could be seen, his fatigue and his real feelings showed; he had ceased to smile.

"That secret?" said she, turning round.

"You have been such a heroic nurse that the heir-presumptive of the du Guénics is dearer to me than ever; I wanted to surprise you—just like a worthy citizen of the Rue Saint-Denis. A dressing-table is being fitted for you which is a work of art—my mother and Aunt Zéphirine have helped . . ."

Sabine threw her arms round Calyste, and held him clasped to her heart, her head on his neck, trembling with the weight of happiness, not on account of the dressing-table, but because her suspicions were blown to the winds. It was one of those glorious gushes of joy which can be counted in a lifetime, and of which even the most excessive love cannot be prodigal, for life would be too quickly burned out. Men ought, in such moments, to kneel at the woman's feet in adoration, for the impulse is sublime; all the powers of the heart and intellect overflow as water gushes from the urn of fountain-nymphs. Sabine melted into tears.

Suddenly, as if stung by a viper, she pushed Calyste from her, dropped on to a divan, and fainted away; the sudden chill on her glowing heart had almost killed her. As she held Calyste, her nose in his necktie, given up to happiness, she had smelled the same perfume as that on the notepaper!—Another woman's head had lain there, her face and hair had left the very scent of adultery. She had just kissed the spot where her rival's kisses were still warm.

"What is the matter?" said Calyste, after bringing Sabine back to her senses by bathing her face with a wet handkerchief.

"Go and fetch the doctor, and the accoucheur—both. Yes, I feel the milk has turned to fever. . . . They will not come at once unless you go yourself—" *Vous*, she said, not *tu*, and the *vous* startled Calyste, who flew off in alarm. As soon as Sabine heard the outer gate shut, she sprang to her feet like a frightened deer, and walked

round and round the room like a crazy thing, exclaiming, "My God! my God! my God!"

The two words took the place of thought. The crisis she had used as a pretext really came on. The hair on her head felt like so many eels, made redhot in the fire of nervous torment. Her heated blood seemed to her to have mingled with her nerves, and to be bursting from every pore. For a moment she was blind. "I am dying!" she shrieked.

At this fearful cry of an insulted wife and mother, her maid came in; and when she had been carried to her bed and had recovered her sight and senses, her first gleam of intelligence made her send the woman to fetch her friend Madame de Portenduère. Sabine felt her thoughts swirling in her brain like straws in a whirlwind.

"I saw myriads of them at once," she said afterward.

Then she rang for the manservant, and in the transport of fever found strength enough to write the following note, for she was possessed by a mania, she must be sure of the truth:

*To Madame la Baronne du Guénic*

"Dear Mamma—When you come to Paris, as you have led us to hope you may, I will thank you in person for the beautiful present by which you and Aunt Zéphirine and Calyste propose to thank me for having done my duty. I have been amply paid by my own happiness.—I cannot attempt to express my pleasure in this beautiful dressing-table, when you are here I will try to tell you. Believe me, when I dress before this glass, I shall always think, like the Roman lady, that my choicest jewel is our darling angel," and so on.

She had this letter posted by her own maid.

When the Vicomtesse de Portenduère came in, the shivering fit of a violent fever had succeeded the first paroxysm of madness.

"Ursule, I believe I am going to die," said she.

"What ails you, my dear?"

"Tell me, what did Calyste and Savinien do yesterday evening after dinner at your house?"

"What dinner?" replied Ursule, to whom her husband had as yet said nothing, not expecting an immediate inquiry. "Savinien and I dined alone last evening, and went to the Opera without Calyste."

"Ursule, dear child, in the name of your love for Savinien, I adjure you, keep the secret of what I have asked you and what I will tell you. You alone will know what I am dying of—I am betrayed, at the end of three years—when I am not yet three-and-twenty—"

Her teeth chattered, her eyes were lifeless and dull; her face had the greenish hue and surface of old Venetian glass.

"You—so handsome!—But for whom?"

"I do not know. But Calyste has lied to me—twice. Not a word! Do not pity me, do not be indignant, affect ignorance; you will hear *who*, perhaps, through Savinien. —Oh! yesterday's note—"

And shivering in her shift, she flew to a little cabinet and took out the letter.

"A Marquise's coronet!" she said, getting into bed again. "Find out whether Madame de Rochefide is in Paris. Have I a heart left to weep or groan?—Oh, my dear, to see my beliefs, my poem, my idol, my virtue, my happiness, all, all destroyed, crushed, lost!—There is no God in Heaven now, no love on earth, no more life in my heart—nothing! —I do not feel sure of the daylight, I doubt if there is a sun.—In short, my heart is suffering so cruelly that I hardly feel the horrible pain in my breast and my face. Happily the child is weaned. My milk would have poisoned him!" And at this thought, a torrent of tears relieved her eyes, hitherto dry.

Pretty Madame de Portenduère, holding the fatal note which Sabine had smelled at for certainty, stood speechless at this desperate woe, amazed by this death of love, and

unable to say anything in spite of the incoherent fragments in which Sabine strove to tell her all. Suddenly Ursule was enlightened by one of those flashes which come only to sincere souls.

"I must save her!" thought she. "Wait till I return, Sabine," cried she. "I will know the truth."

"Oh, and I shall love you in my grave!" cried Sabine.

Madame de Portenduère went to the Duchesse de Grandlieu, insisted on absolute secrecy, and informed her as to the state Sabine was in.

"Madame," said she, in conclusion, "are you not of opinion that, to save her from some dreadful illness, or perhaps even madness—who can tell?—we ought to tell the doctor everything, and invent some fables about that abominable Calyste, so as to make him seem innocent, at any rate, for the present."

"My dear child," said the Duchess, who had felt a chill at this revelation, "friendship has lent you for the nonce the experience of a woman of my age. I know how Sabine worships her husband; you are right, she may go mad."

"And she might lose her beauty, which would be worse," said the Vicomtesse.

"Let us go at once!" cried the Duchess.

They, happily, were a few minutes in advance of the famous accoucheur Dommanget, the only one of the two doctors whom Calyste had succeeded in finding.

"Ursule has told me all," said the Duchess to her daughter. "You are mistaken. In the first place, Béatrix is not in Paris. As to what your husband was doing yesterday, my darling, he lost a great deal of money, and does not know where to find enough to pay for your dressing-table—"

"And this?" interrupted Sabine, holding out the note.

"This!" said the Duchess, laughing, "is Jockey Club paper. Every one writes on coroneted paper—the grocers will have titles soon—"

The prudent mother tossed the ill-starred document into the fire.

When Calyste and Dommanget arrived, the Duchess, who had given her orders, was informed; she left Sabine with Madame de Portenduère, and met the doctor and Calyste in the drawing-room.

"Sabine's life is in danger, Monsieur," said she to Calyste. "You have been false to her with Madame de Rochefide"—Calyste blushed like a still decent girl caught tripping —"and as you do not know how to deceive," the Duchess went on, "you were so clumsy that Sabine guessed everything. You do not wish my daughter's death, I suppose?—All this, Monsieur Dommanget, gives you a clew to my daughter's illness and its cause.—As for you, Calyste, an old woman like me can understand your error, but I do not forgive you. Such forgiveness can only be purchased by a life of happiness. If you desire my esteem, first save my child's life. Then forget Madame de Rochefide—she is good for nothing after the first time!—Learn to lie, have the courage and impudence of a criminal. I have lied, God knows! I, who shall be compelled to do cruel penance for such mortal sin."

She explained to him the fictions she had just invented. The skilful doctor, sitting by the bed, was studying the patient's symptoms, and the means of staving off the mischief. While he was prescribing measures, of which the success must depend on their immediate execution, Calyste, at the foot of the bed, kept his eyes fixed on Sabine, trying to give them an expression of tender anxiety.

"Then it is gambling that has given you those dark marks round your eyes?" she said in a feeble voice.

The words startled the doctor, the mother, and Ursule, who looked at each other; Calyste turned as red as a cherry.

"That comes of suckling your child," said Dommanget, cleverly but roughly. "Then husbands are dull, being so much separated from their wives, they go to the club and

play high. But do not lament over the thirty thousand francs that Monsieur le Baron lost last night—"

"Thirty thousand francs!" said Ursule like a simpleton.

"Yes, I know it for certain," replied Dommanget. "I heard this morning at the house of the Duchesse Berthe de Maufrigneuse that you lost the money to Monsieur de Trailles," he added to Calyste. "How can you play with such a man? Honestly, Monsieur le Baron, I understand your being ashamed of yourself."

Calyste, a kind and generous soul, when he saw his mother-in-law—the pious Duchess, the young Viscountess—a happy wife, and a selfish old doctor all lying like curiosity dealers, understood the greatness of the danger; he shed two large tears, which deceived Sabine.

"Monsieur," said she, sitting up in bed, and looking wrathfully at Dommanget, "Monsieur du Guénic may lose thirty, fifty, a hundred thousand francs if he chooses without giving any one a right to find fault with him or lecture him. It is better that Monsieur de Trailles should have won the money from him than that we, *we*, should have won from Monsieur de Trailles!"

Calyste rose and put his arm round his wife's neck. Kissing her on both cheeks, he said in her ear, "Sabine, you are an angel!"

Two days later the young Baroness was considered out of danger. On the following day Calyste went to Madame de Rochefide, and making a virtue of his infamy: "Béatrix," said he, "you owe me much happiness. I sacrificed my poor wife to you, and she discovered everything. The fatal note-paper on which you made me write, with your initial and coronet on it, which I did not happen to see—I saw nothing but you! The letter B, happily, was worn away; but the scent you left clinging to me, the lies in which I entangled myself like a fool, have ruined my happiness. Sabine has been at death's door; the milk went to her brain, she has erysipelas, and will perhaps be disfigured for life . . ."

Béatrix, while listening to this harangue, had a face of arctic coldness, enough to freeze the Seine if she had looked at it.

"Well, so much the better; it may bleach her a little, perhaps." And Béatrix, as dry as her own bones, as variable as her complexion, as sharp as her voice, went on in this tone, a tirade of cruel epigrams.

There can be no greater blunder than for a husband to talk to his mistress of his wife, if she is virtuous, unless it be to talk to his wife of his mistress if she is handsome. But Calyste had not yet had the sort of Parisian education which may be called the good manners of the passions. He could neither tell his wife a lie nor tell his mistress the truth—an indispensable training to enable a man to manage women. So he was obliged to appeal to all the powers of passion for two long hours, to wring from Béatrix the forgiveness he begged, denied him by an angel who raised her eyes to heaven not to see the culprit, and who uttered the reasons peculiar to Marquises in a voice choked with well-feigned tears, that she furtively wiped away with the lace edge of her handkerchief.

"You can talk to me of your wife the very day after I have yielded!—Why not say at once that she is a pearl of virtue? I know, she admires your beauty! That is what I call depravity! I—I love your soul! For I assure you, my dear boy, you are hideous compared with some shepherds of the Roman Campagna—" etc., etc.

This tone may seem strange, but it was a part of a system deliberately planned by Béatrix. In her third incarnation—for a woman completely changes with each fresh passion—she is far advanced in fraud—that is the only word that can describe the result of the experience gained in such adventures. The Marquise de Rochefide had sat in judgment on herself in front of her mirror. Clever women have no delusions about themselves; they count their wrinkles; they watch the beginnings of crows'-feet; they note the appearance of every speck in their skin; they know themselves by heart,

and show it too plainly by the immense pains they take to preserve their beauty. And so, to contend against a beautiful young wife, to triumph over her six days a week, Béatrix sought to win by the weapons of the courtesan. Without confessing to herself the baseness of her conduct, and carried away to use such means by a Turklike passion for the handsome young man, she resolved to make him believe that he was clumsy, ugly, ill made, and to behave as if she hated him.

There is no more successful method with men of a domineering nature. To them the conquest of such disdain is the triumph of the first day renewed on every morrow. It is more: it is flattery hidden under the mask of aversion, and owing to it the charm and truth which underlie all the metamorphoses invented by the great nameless poets. Does not a man then say to himself, "I am irresistible!" or "I must love her well, since I conquer her repugnance!" If you deny this principle, which flirts and courtesans of every social grade discovered long ago, you must discredit the pursuers of science, the inquirers into secrets, who have long been repulsed in their duel with hidden causes.

Béatrix seconded her use of contempt as a moral incitement by a constant comparison between her comfortable, poetic home and the Hotel du Guénic. Every deserted wife neglects her home out of deep discouragement. Foreseeing this, Madame de Rochefide began covert innuendoes as to the luxury of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, which she stigmatized as absurd. The reconciliation scene, when Béatrix made Calyste swear to hate the wife who, as she said, was playing the farce of spilled milk, took place in a perfect bower, where she put herself into attitudes in the midst of beautiful flowers and jardinières of lavish costliness. She carried the art of trifles, of fashionable toys, to an extreme. Béatrix, sunk into contempt since Conti's desertion, was bent on gaining such fame as may be had by sheer perversity. The woes of a young wife, a Grandlieu, rich and lovely, were to build her a pedestal.

When a woman reappears in society after nursing her first child, she comes out again improved in charm and beauty. If this phase of maternity can rejuvenate even women no longer in their first youth, it gives young wives a splendid freshness, a cheerful activity, a *brio* of life—if we may apply to the body a word which the Italians have invented for the mind. But while trying to resume the pleasant habits of the honeymoon, Sabine did not find the same Calyste. The unhappy girl watched him instead of abandoning herself to happiness. She expected the fatal perfume, and she smelled it; and she no longer confided in Ursule, nor in her mother, who had so charitably deceived her. She wanted certainty, and she had not long to wait for it. Certainty is never coy; it is like the sun, we soon need to pull down the blinds before it. In love it is a repetition of the fable of the Woodman calling on Death. We wish that certainty would blind us.

One morning, a fortnight after the first catastrophe, Sabine received this dreadful letter:

*To Madame la Baronne du Guénic*

"GUÉRANDE.

"MY DEAR DAUGHTER—My sister Zéphirine and I are lost in conjectures as to the dressing-table mentioned in your letter; I am writing about it to Calyste, and beg your forgiveness for my ignorance. You cannot doubt our affection. We are saving treasure for you. Thanks to Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoel's advice as to the management of your land, you will in a few years find yourself possessed of a considerable capital without having to diminish your expenditure.

"Your letter, dearest daughter—whom I love as much as if I had borne you and fed you at my own breast—surprised me by its brevity, and especially by your making no mention of my dear little Calyste; you had nothing to tell me about the elder Calyste; he, I know, is happy," etc.

Sabine wrote across this letter, "*Brittany is too noble to lie with one accord!*" and laid it on Calyste's writing-table. He

found it and read it. After recognizing Sabine's writing in the line across it, he threw it into the fire, determined never to have seen it. Sabine spent a whole week in misery, of which the secret may be understood by those celestial or hermit souls that have never been touched by the wing of the fallen angel. Calyste's silence terrified Sabine.

"I, who ought to be all sweetness, all joy to him—I have vexed him, hurt him! My virtue is become hateful; I have perhaps humiliated my idol," said she to herself.

These thoughts plowed furrows in her soul. She thought of asking forgiveness for this fault, but certainty brought her fresh proofs.

Béatrix, insolently bold, wrote to Calyste one day at his own house. The letter was put into Madame du Guénic's hands; she gave it to her husband unopened, but she said, with death in her soul, and in a broken voice: "My dear, this note is from the Jockey Club; I know the scent and the paper."

Calyste blushed and put the letter in his pocket.

"Why do you not read it?"

"I know what they want."

The young wife sat down. She did not get an attack of fever, she did not cry, but she felt one of those surges of rage which in such feeble creatures bring forth monsters of crime, which arm them with arsenic for themselves or for their rivals. Little Calyste was presently brought to her, and she took him on her lap; the child, but just weaned, turned to find the breast under her dress.

"He remembers!" said she in a whisper.

Calyste went to his room to read the letter. When he was gone the poor young creature burst into tears, such tears as women shed when they are alone. Pain, like pleasure, has its initiatory stage; the first anguish, like that of which Sabine had so nearly died, can never recur, any more than a first experience of any kind. It is the first wedge of the torture of the heart; the others are expected, the wringing of the nerves is a known thing, the capital of strength has

accumulated a deposit for firm resistance. And Sabine, sure now of the worst, sat by the fire for three hours with her boy on her knee, and was quite startled when Gasselin, now their house-servant, came to announce that dinner was on the table.

"Let Monsieur know."

"Monsieur is not dining at home, Madame la Baronne."

Who can tell all the misery for a young woman of three-and-twenty, the torture of finding herself alone in the midst of a vast dining-room, in an ancient house, served by silent men, and in such circumstances?

"Order the carriage," she said suddenly; "I am going to the Opera."

She dressed splendidly; she meant to show herself alone, and smiling like a happy woman. In the midst of her remorse for the indorsement on that letter she was determined to triumph, to bring Calyste back to her by the greatest gentleness, by wifely virtues, by the meekness of a Paschal lamb. She would lie to all Paris. She loved him, she loved him as courtesans love, or angels, with pride and with humility.

But the Opera was "Othello." When Rubini sang "Il mio cor si divide," she fled. Music is often more powerful than the poet and the actor, the two most formidable natures combined. Savinien de Portenduère accompanied Sabine to the portico and put her into her carriage, unable to account for her precipitate escape.

Madame du Guénic now entered on a period of sufferings such as only the highest classes can know. You who are poor, envious, wretched, when you see on ladies' arms those snakes with diamond heads, those necklaces and pins, tell yourselves that those vipers sting, that those necklaces have poisoned teeth, that those light bonds cut into the tender flesh to the very quick. All this luxury must be paid for. In Sabine's position women can curse the pleasures of wealth; they cease to see the gilding of their rooms, the silk of sofas is as tow, exotic flowers as nettles, perfumes stink, miracles

of cookery scrape the throat like barley-bread, and life has the bitterness of the Dead Sea.

Two or three instances will so plainly show the reaction of a room or of a woman on happiness, that every one who has experienced it will be reminded of their home life.

Sabine, warned of the dreadful truth, studied her husband when he was going out, to guess at the day's prospects. With what a surge of suppressed fury does a woman fling herself on to the red-hot pikes of such torture!—What joy for Sabine when he did not go to the Rue de Courcelles! When he came in, she would look at his brow, his hair, his eyes, his expression and attitude, with a horrible interest in trifles, and the studious observation of the most recondite details of his dress, by which a woman loses her self-respect and dignity. These sinister investigations, buried in her heart, turned sour there and corroded the slender roots, whence grow the blue flowers of holy confidence, the golden stars of saintly love, all the blossoms of memory.

One day Calyste looked round at everything with ill-humor, but he stayed at home! Sabine was coaxing and humble, cheerful and amusing.

"You are cross with me, Calyste; am I not a good wife?—What is there here that you do not like?"

"All the rooms are so cold and bare," said he. "You do not understand this kind of thing."

"What is wanting?"

"Flowers—"

"Very good," said Sabine to herself; "Madame de Rochefide is fond of flowers, it would seem."

Two days later the rooms at the Hôtel du Guénic were completely altered. No house in Paris could pride itself on finer flowers than those that decorated it.

Some time after this Calyste, one evening after dinner, complained of the cold. He shivered in his chair, looking about him to see whence the draught came, and evidently seeking something close about him. It was some time before Sabine could guess the meaning of this new whim, for

the house was fitted with a hot-air furnace to warm the staircase, anterooms, and passages. Finally, after three days' meditation, it struck her that her rival had a screen, no doubt, so as to produce the subdued light that was favorable to the deterioration of her face; so Sabine purchased a screen made of glass, and of Jewish magnificence.

"Which way will the wind blow now?" she wondered.

This was not the end of the mistress's indirect criticism. Calyste ate so little at home as to drive Sabine crazy.

"Is it not nice?" asked Sabine, in despair, seeing all the pains wasted which she devoted to her conferences with the cook.

"I do not say so, my darling," replied Calyste, without annoyance. "I am not hungry, that is all."

A wife given up to a legitimate passion and to such a contest as this, feels a sort of fury in her desire to triumph over her rival, and often outruns the mark even in the most secret regions of married life. This cruel struggle, fierce and ceaseless, over the visible and outward facts of home life was carried on with equal frenzy over the feelings of the heart. Sabine studied her attitudes and dress, and watched herself in the smallest trivialities of love.

This matter of the cookery went on for nearly a month. Sabine, with the help of Mariotte and Gasselin, invented stage tricks to discover what dishes Madame de Rochefide served up for Calyste. Gasselin took the place of the coachman, who fell ill to order, and was thus enabled to make friends with Béatrix's cook; so at last Sabine could give Calyste the same fare, only better; but again she saw him give himself airs over it.

"What is wanting?" said she.

"Nothing," he answered, looking round the table for something that was not there.

"Ah!" cried Sabine to herself, as she woke next morning, "Calyste is pining for powdered cockroaches[1] and all

[1] Balzac has *hannetons*, cockchafers. It was an old joke that Soy was made of cockroaches.—TRANSLATOR.

the English condiments which are sold by the druggist in cruets; Madame de Rochefide has accustomed him to all sorts of spices."

She bought an English cruet-stand and its scorching contents; but she could not pursue her discoveries down to every dainty devised by her rival.

This phase lasted for several months; nor need we wonder when we remember all the attractions of such a contest. It is life; with all its wounds and pangs it is preferable to the blank gloom of disgust, to the poison of contempt, to the blankness of abdication, to the death of the heart that we call indifference. Still, all Sabine's courage oozed out one evening when she appeared dressed, as women only dress by a sort of inspiration, in the hope of winning the victory over another, and when Calyste said with a laugh:

"Do what you will, Sabine, you will never be anything but a lovely Andalusian!"

"Alas!" said she, sinking on to her sofa, "I can never be fair. But if this goes on, I know that I shall soon be five-and-thirty."

She refused to go to the Italian opera; she meant to stay in her room all the evening. When she was alone she tore the flowers from her hair and stamped upon them, she undressed, trampled her gown, her sash, all her finery under foot, exactly like a goat caught in a loop of its tether, which never ceases struggling till death. Then she went to bed. The maid presently came in. Imagine her surprise!

"It is nothing," said Sabine. "It is Monsieur."

Unhappy wives know this superb vanity, these falsehoods, where, of two kinds of shame both in arms, the more womanly wins the day.

Sabine was growing thin under these terrible agitations, grief ate into her soul; but she never forgot the part she had forced on herself. A sort of fever kept her up, her life sent back to her throat the bitter words suggested to

her by grief; she sheathed the lightnings of her fine black eyes, and made them soft, even humble.

Her fading health was soon perceptible. The Duchess, an admirable mother, though her piety had become more and more Portuguese, thought there was some mortal disease in the really sick condition which Sabine evidently encouraged. She knew of the acknowledged intimacy of Calyste and Béatrix. She took care to have her daughter with her to try to heal her wounded feelings, and, above all, to save her from her daily martyrdom; but Sabine for a long time remained persistently silent as to her woes, fearing some intervention between herself and Calyste. She declared she was happy! Having exhausted sorrow, she fell back on her pride, on all her virtues.

At the end of a month, however, of being petted by her sister Clotilde and her mother, she confessed her griefs, told them all her sufferings, and cursed life, saying that she looked forward to death with delirious joy. She desired Clotilde, who meant never to marry, to be a mother to little Calyste, the loveliest child any royal race need wish for as its heir-presumptive.

One evening, sitting with her youngest sister Athénaïs —who was to be married to the Vicomte de Grandlieu after Lent—with Clotilde, and the Duchess, Sabine uttered the last cry of her anguish of heart, wrung from her by the extremity of her last humiliation.

"Athénaïs," said she, when, at about eleven o'clock, the young Vicomte Juste de Grandlieu took his leave, "you are going to be married; profit by my example! Keep your best qualities to yourself as if they were a crime, resist the temptation to display them in order to please Juste. Be calm, dignified, cold; measure out the happiness you give in proportion to what you receive! It is mean, but it is necessary. — You see, I am ruined by my merits. All I feel within me that is the best of me, that is fine, holy, noble—all my virtues have been

rocks on which my happiness is shipwrecked. I have ceased to be attractive because I am not six-and-thirty! —In some men's eyes youth is a defect! There is no guesswork in a guileless face.

"I laugh honestly, and that is quite wrong when, to be fascinating, you ought to be able to elaborate the melancholy, suppressed smile of the fallen angels who are obliged to hide their long yellow teeth. A fresh complexion is so monotonous; far preferable is a doll's waxen surface, compounded of rouge, spermaceti, and cold-cream. I am straightforward, and double-dealing is more pleasing! I am frankly in love like an honest woman, and I ought to be trained to tricks and manœuvres like a country actress. I am intoxicated with the delight of having one of the most charming men in France for my husband, and I tell him sincerely how fine a gentleman he is, how gracefully he moves, how handsome I think him; to win him I ought to look away with affected aversion, to hate love-making, to tell him that his air of distinction is simply an unhealthy pallor and the figure of a consumptive patient, to cry up the shoulders of the Farnese Hercules, to make him angry, keep him at a distance as though a struggle were needed to hide from him at the moment of happiness some imperfection which might destroy love. I am so unlucky as to be able to admire a fine thing without striving to give myself importance by bitter and envious criticism of everything glorious in poetry or beauty. I do not want to be told in verse and in prose by Canalis and Nathan that I have a superior intellect! I am a mere simple girl; I see no one but Calyste!

"If I had only run all over the world as she has; if, like her, I had said, 'I love you' in every European tongue, I should be made much of, and pitied, and adored, and could serve him up a Macedonian banquet of cosmopolitan loves! A man does not thank you for your tenderness till you have set it off by contrast with malignity. So I, a well-born wife, must learn all impurity, the interested charms of a prostitute! . . . And Calyste, the dupe of this grimacing! . . . Oh,

mother! oh, my dear Clotilde! I am stricken to death. My pride is a deceptive ægis; I am defenceless against sorrow; I still love my husband like a fool, and to bring him back to me I need to borrow the keen wit of indifference."

"Silly child," whispered Clotilde, "pretend that you are bent on vengeance."

"I mean to die blameless, without even the appearance of wrong-doing," replied Sabine. "Our vengeance should be worthy of our love."

"My child," said the Duchess, "a mother should look on life with colder eyes than yours. Love is not the end but the means of family life. Do not imitate that poor little Baronne de Macumer. Excessive passion is barren and fatal. And God sends us our afflictions for reasons of His own. . . .

"Now that Athénaïs's marriage is a settled thing, I shall have time to attend to you. I have already discussed the delicate position in which you are placed with your father and the Duc de Chaulieu and d'Ajuda. We shall find means to bring Calyste back to you."

"With the Marquise de Rochefide there is no cause for despair," said Clotilde, smiling at her sister. "She does not keep her adorers long."

"D'Ajuda, my darling, was Monsieur de Rochefide's brother-in-law. If our good Confessor approves of the little manœuvres we must achieve to insure the success of the plan I have submitted to your father, I will guarantee Calyste's return. My conscience loathes the use of such methods, and I will lay them before the Abbé Brossette. We need not wait, my child, till you are *in extremis* to come to your assistance. Keep up your hopes. Your grief this evening is so great that I have let out my secret; I cannot bear not to give you a little encouragement."

"Will it cause Calyste any grief?" asked Sabine, looking anxiously at the Duchess.

"Bless me, shall I be such another fool?" asked Athénaïs simply.

"Oh! child, you cannot know the straits into which Virtue can plunge us when she allows herself to be overruled by Love!" replied Sabine, so bewildered with grief that she fell into a vein of poetry.

The words were spoken with such intense bitterness that the Duchess, enlightened by her daughter's tone, accent, and look, understood that there was some unconfessed trouble.

"Girls, it is midnight; go to bed," said she to the two others, whose eyes were sparkling.

"And am I in the way too, in spite of my six-and-thirty years?" asked Clotilde ironically. And while Athénais was kissing her mother, she whispered in Sabine's ear:

"You shall tell me all about it. I will dine with you to-morrow. If mamma is afraid of compromising her conscience, I myself will rescue Calyste from the hands of the infidels."

"Well, Sabine," said the Duchess, leading her daughter into her bedroom, "tell me, my child, what is the new trouble?"

"Oh, mother, I am done for!"

"Why?"

"I wanted to triumph over that horrible woman; I succeeded, I have another child coming, and Calyste loves her so vehemently that I foresee being absolutely deserted. When she has proof of this infidelity to her she will be furious!—Oh, I am suffering such torments that I must die. I know when he is going to her, know it by his glee; then his surliness shows me when he has left her. In short, he makes no secret of it; he cannot endure me. Her influence over him is as unwholesome as she is herself, body and soul. You will see; as her reward for making up some quarrel, she will insist on a public rupture with me, a breach like her own; she will carry him off to Switzerland perhaps, or to Italy. He has been saying that it is ridiculous to know nothing of Europe, and I can guess what these hints mean, thrown out as a warning. If Calyste is

not cured within the next three months, I do not know what will come of it—I shall kill myself, I know!"

"Unhappy child! And your son? Suicide is a mortal sin."

"But do not you understand—she might bear him a child; and if Calyste loved that woman's more than mine—Oh! this is the end of my patience and resignation."

She dropped on a chair; she had poured out the inmost thoughts of her heart; she had no hidden pang left; and sorrow is like the iron prop that sculptors place inside a clay figure, it is supporting, it is a power.

"Well, well, go home now, poor little thing! Face to face with so much suffering, perhaps the Abbé will give me absolution for the venial sins we are forced to commit by the trickery of the world. Leave me, daughter," she said, going to her prie-Dieu; "I will beseech the Lord and the Blessed Virgin more especially for you. Above all, do not neglect your religious duties if you hope for success."

"Succeed as we may, mother, we can only save the family honor. Calyste has killed the sacred fervor of love in me by exhausting all my powers, even of suffering. What a honeymoon was that in which from the first day I was bitterly conscious of his retrospective adultery!"

At about one in the afternoon of the following day one of the priests of the Faubourg Saint-Germain—a man distinguished among the clergy of Paris, designate as a Bishop in 1840, but who had three times refused a see—the Abbé Brossette was crossing the courtyard of the Hotel Grandlieu with the peculiar gait one must call the ecclesiastical gait, so expressive is it of prudence, mystery, calmness, gravity, and dignity itself. He was a small, lean man, about fifty years of age, with a face as white as an old woman's, chilled by priestly fasting, furrowed by all the sufferings he made his own. Black eyes, alight with faith, but softened by an expression that was mysterious rather than mystical, gave life to this apostolic countenance. He almost smiled as he

went up the steps, so little did he believe in the enormity of the case for which his penitent had sent for him; but as the Duchess's hand was a sieve for alms, she was well worth the time her guileless confessions stole from the serious troubles of his parish. On hearing him announced, the Duchess rose and went forward a few steps to meet him, an honor she did to none but cardinals, bishops, priests of every grade, duchesses older than herself, and personages of the blood royal.

"My dear Abbé," said she, pointing to an armchair, and speaking in a low tone, "I require the authority of your experience before I embark on a rather nasty intrigue, from which, however, I hope for a good result; I wish to learn from you whether I shall find the way of salvation very thorny in consequence."

"Madame la Duchesse," said the Abbé Brossette, "do not mix up spiritual and worldly matters; they are often irreconcilable.—In the first place, what is this business?"

"My daughter Sabine, you know, is dying of grief. Monsieur du Guénic neglects her for Madame de Rochefide."

"It is terrible—a very serious matter; but you know what the beloved Saint-François de Sales says of such a case. And remember Madame de Guyon, who bewailed the lack of mysticism in the proofs of conjugal love; she would have been only too glad to find a Madame de Rochefide for her husband."

"Sabine is only too meek, she is only too completely the Christian wife; but she has not the smallest taste for mysticism."

"Poor young thing!" said the curé slyly. "And what is your plan for remedying the mischief?"

"I have been so sinful, my dear Director, as to think that I might let loose at her a smart little gentleman, wilful, and stocked with evil characteristics, who will certainly get my son-in-law out of the way."

"Daughter," said he, stroking his chin, "we are not in

the tribunal of the repentant; I need not speak as your judge.—From a worldly point of view, I confess it would be final—"

"Such a proceeding strikes me as truly odious!" she put in.

"And why? It is, no doubt, far more the part of a Christian to snatch a woman from her evil ways than to push her forward in them; still, when she has already gone so far as Madame de Rochefide, it is not the hand of man, but the hand of God, that can rescue the sinner. She needs a special sign from Heaven."

"Thank you, Father, for your indulgence," said the Duchess. "But we must remember that my son-in-law is brave, and a Breton; he was heroic at the time of that poor MADAME'S attempted rising. Now, if the young scapegrace who should undertake to charm Madame de Rochefide were to fall out with Calyste, and a duel should ensue—"

"There, Madame la Duchesse, you show your wisdom; this proves that in such devious courses we always find some stumbling-block."

"But I hit upon a means, my dear Abbé, of doing good, of rescuing Madame de Rochefide from the fatal path she is following, of bringing Calyste back to his wife, and of saving a poor wandering soul perhaps from hell—"

"But, then, why consult me?" said the curé, smiling.

"Well," said the Duchess, "I should have to do some ugly things—"

"You do not mean to rob any one?"

"On the contrary, I shall probably spend a good deal of money."

"You will not slander anybody, nor—"

"Oh!"

"Nor do any injury to your neighbor?"

"Well, well, I cannot answer for that."

"Let us hear this new plan," said the curé, really curious.

"If, instead of driving one nail out by another, thought I, as I knelt on my prie-Dieu, after beseeching the Blessed

Virgin to guide me, I were to get Monsieur de Rochefide to take back his wife and pack off Calyste—then, instead of abetting evil to do good, I should be doing a good action through another by means of a no less good deed of my own—" The priest looked at the lady, and seemed thoughtful.

"The idea has evidently come to you from so far that—"

"Yes," said the simple and humble-minded woman, "and I have thanked the Virgin.—And I vowed that besides paying for a *neuvaine*, I would give twelve hundred francs to some poor family if I should succeed. But when I spoke of the matter to Monsieur de Grandlieu, he burst out laughing, and said: 'I really believe that at your time of life you women have a special devil all to yourselves.' "

"Monsieur le Duc said, in a husband's fashion, just what I was about to observe when you interrupted me," replied the Abbé, who could not help smiling.

"Oh, Father, if you approve of the plan, will you approve of the method of execution? The point will be to do with a certain Madame Schontz—a Béatrix of the Saint-Georges quarter—what I had intended to do with Béatrix; the Marquis will then return to his wife."

"I am sure you will do no wrong," said the Abbé dexterously, not choosing to know more, as he thought the result necessary. "And you can consult me if your conscience makes itself heard," he added. "Supposing that, instead of affording the lady in the Rue Saint-Georges some fresh occasion of misconduct, you were to find her a husband—?"

"Ah, my dear Director, you have set right the only bad feature of my scheme. You are worthy to be an archbishop, and I hope to live to address you as your Eminence."

"In all this, I see but one hitch," the priest went on.

"And what is that?"

"Madame de Rochefide might keep your son-in-law even if she returned to her husband?"

"That is my affair," said the Duchess. "We, who so rarely intrigue, when we do—"

"Do it badly, very badly," said the Abbé. "Practice is needed for everything. Try to annex one of the rascally race who live on intrigue, and employ him without betraying yourself."

"Oh! Monsieur le Curé, but if we have recourse to hell, will heaven be on our side?"

"You are not in the confessional," replied the Abbé; "save your child."

The good Duchess, delighted with the keeper of her conscience, escorted him as far as the drawing-room door.

A storm, it will be seen, was gathering over Monsieur de Rochefide, who, at this time, was enjoying the greatest share of happiness that a Parisian need desire, finding himself quite as much the master in Madame Schontz's house as in his wife's; as the Duke had very shrewdly remarked to his wife, it would seem impossible to upset so delightful and perfect a plan of life. This theory of the matter necessitates a few details as to the life led by Monsieur de Rochefide since his wife had placed him in the position of a deserted husband. We shall thus understand the enormous difference in the view taken by law and by custom of the two sexes in the same circumstances. Everything that works woe to a deserted wife becomes happiness to the deserted husband. This striking antithesis may perhaps induce more than one young wife to remain in her home and fight it out, like Sabine du Guénic, by practicing the most cruel or the most inoffensive virtues, whichever she may prefer.

A few days after Béatrix's flight, Arthur de Rochefide —an only child after the death of his sister, the first wife of the Marquis d'Ajuda-Pinto, who left him no children—found himself master of the family mansion of the Rochefides, Rue d'Anjou-Saint-Honoré, and of two hundred thousand francs a year, left to him by his father. This fine fortune, added

to that which he had when he married, raised his income, including his wife's portion, to a thousand francs a day. To a gentleman of such a character as Mademoiselle des Touches had sketched to Calyste, such a fortune was happiness. While his wife was occupied with love-making and motherhood, Rochefide was enjoying his vast possessions, but he did not waste the money any more than he would waste his intelligence. His burly, good-natured conceit, amply satisfied with the reputation for being a fine man, to which he owed some success, entitling him, as he believed, to condemn women as a class, gave itself full play in the sphere of intellect. He was gifted with the sort of wit which may be termed refracting, by the way he repeated other person's jests and witticisms from plays or the newspapers; he appropriated them as his own; he affected to ridicule them, caricaturing them in repetition, and using them as a formula of criticism; then his military high spirits—for he had served in the King's Guard—lent spice to his conversation, so that dull women called him witty, and the rest dared not contradict them.

Arthur carried this system out in everything; he owed to Nature the useful trick of being an imitator without being an ape; he could imitate quite seriously. And so, though he had no taste, he was always the first to take up and to drop a fashion. He was accused of giving too much time to his toilet, and of wearing stays; but he was a typical example of those men who, by accepting the notions and the follies of others, never offend any one, who, always being up to date, never grow any older. They are the heroes of the second-rate.

This husband was pitied; Béatrix was held inexcusable for having run away from the best fellow in the world; ridicule fell only on the wife. This worthy, loyal, and very silly gentleman, a member of every club, a subscriber to every absurdity to which blundering patriotism and party-spirit gave rise, with a facile good-nature which brought him to the front on every occasion, was, of course, bent on glorify-

ing himself by some fashionable hobby. His chief pride was to be the sultan of a four-footed seraglio, managed by an old English groom, and this kennel cost him from four to five thousand francs a month. His favorite fad was running horses; he patronized breeders, and paid the expenses of a paper in the racing interest; but he knew little about horses, and from the bridle to the shoes trusted to his groom. This is enough to show that this "grass-husband" had nothing of his own—neither wit, nor taste, nor position, nor even absurdities; and his fortune had come to him from his forefathers.

After having tasted all the annoyances of married life, he was so happy to find himself a bachelor again that he would say among friends, "I was born to good luck!" He rejoiced especially in being able to live free of the expenses to which married folk are compelled; and his house, in which nothing had been altered since his father's death, was in the state of a man's home when he is travelling; he rarely went there, never fed there, and scarcely ever slept there.

This was the history of this neglect. After many love affairs, tired of women of fashion, who are indeed weariful enough, and who set too many dry thorn-hedges round the happiness they have to give, he had practically married Madame Schontz, a woman notorious in the world of Fanny Beaupré and Suzanne du Val-Noble, of Mariettes, Florentines, Jenny Cadines, and the like. This world—of which one of our draughtsmen wittily remarked, as he pointed to the whirl of an Opera ball, "When you think that all that mob is well housed, and dressed, and fed, you can form a good idea of what men are!"—this dangerous world has already been seen in this History of Manners in the typical figures of Florine and the famous Malaga (of "A Daughter of Eve" and "The Imaginary Mistress"); but to paint it faithfully, the historian would have to represent such persons in some numerical proportion to the variety of their strange individual lives, ending in poverty of the most hideous kind, in early death, in ease, in happy marriages, or sometimes in great wealth.

Madame Schontz, at first known as la Petite Aurélie, to distinguish her from a rival far less clever than herself, belonged to the higher class of these women on whose social uses no doubt can be thrown either by the Préfet of the Seine or by those who take an interest in the prosperity of the city of Paris. Certainly the "rats" accused of devouring fortunes, which are often imaginary, in some respects are more like a beaver. Without the Aspasias of the Notre-Dame de Lorette quarter, fewer houses would be built in Paris. Pioneers of fresh stucco, in tow of speculation, pitch their outlying tents along the hillsides of Montmartre, beyond those deserts of masonry which are to be seen in the streets round the Place de l'Europe—Amsterdam, Milan, Stockholm, London and Moscow—architectural steppes betraying their emptiness by endless placards announcing "Apartments to let."

The position of these ladies is commensurate with that of their lodgings in these innominate regions. If the house is near the line marked by the Rue de Provence, the woman has money in the Funds, her income is assured; but if she lives out near the exterior Boulevards, or on the height toward the horrible suburb of Batignolles, she is certainly poor.

Now when Monsieur de Rochefide first met Madame Schontz she was lodging on the third floor of the only house than standing in the Rue de Berlin. The name of this unmarried wife, as you will have understood, was neither Aurélie nor Schontz. She concealed her father's name—that of an old soldier of the Empire, the perennial colonel who always adorns the origin of these existences, as the father or the seducer. Madame Schontz had enjoyed the benefits of a gratuitous education at Saint-Denis, where the young persons are admirably taught, but where the young persons are not provided on leaving with husbands or a living—an admirable foundation of the Emperor's, the only thing lacking being the Emperor himself! "I shall be there to provide for the daughters of my legionaries,"

said he, in answer to one of his Ministers who looked forward to the future. And in the same way Napoleon said, "I shall be there," to the members of the Institute, to whom it would be better to give no honorarium at all than to pay them eighty-three francs a month, less than the wages of many an office clerk.

Aurélie was very certainly the daughter of the valiant Colonel Schiltz, a leader of those daring Alsatian partisans who so nearly succeeded in saving the Emperor in the French campaign; he died at Metz, robbed, neglected, and ruined. In 1814 Napoleon sent little Joséphine Schiltz, then nine years old, to school at Saint-Denis. Without father or mother, home or money, the poor child was not driven out of the Institution on the second return of the Bourbons. She remained there as under-teacher till 1827; but then her patience failed, and her beauty led her astray. When she was of age, Joséphine Schiltz, the Empress's goddaughter, embarked on the adventurous life of the courtesan, tempted to this doubtful career by the fatal example of some of her schoolfellows as destitute as she was, and who rejoiced in their decision. She substituted *on* for *il* in her father's name, and placed herself under the protection of Saint Aurelia.

Clever, witty, and well informed, she made more mistakes than her more stupid companions, whose wrongdoing was always based on self-interest. After various connections with writers, some poor but unmannerly, some clever but in debt; after trying her fortune with some rich men as close-fisted as they were silly; after sacrificing ease to a true passion, and learning in every school where experience may be gained, one day, when, in the depths of poverty, she was dancing at Valentino's—the first stage to Musard's—dressed in a borrowed gown, hat, and cape, she attracted Rochefide's attention; he had come to see the famous galop! Her cleverness bewitched the gentleman, who had exhausted every sensation; and when, two years after, being deserted by Béatrix, whose wit had often disconcerted him, he allied

himself with a second-hand Béatrix "of the Thirteenth Arrondissement," no one thought of blaming him.

We may here give a sketch of the four seasons of such a happy home. It is desirable to show how the theory of "a marriage in the Thirteenth Arrondissement" includes all the whole connection. Whether a marquis of forty or a retired shopkeeper of sixty, a millionnaire six times over or a man of narrow private means, a fine gentleman or a middle-class citizen, the tactics of passion, barring the differences inseparable from dissimilar social spheres, never vary. Heart and banking account maintain an exact and definite relation. And you will be able to form an idea of the obstacles the Duchess must meet with to her charitable scheme.

Few persons understand the power of words over ordinary folk in France, or the mischief done by the wits who invent them. For instance, no bookkeeper could add up the figures of the sums of money which have lain unproductive and rusty at the bottom of generous hearts and full coffers in consequence of the mean phrase, *Tirer une carotte*—to fleece or bleed a victim. The words have become so common that they must be allowed to deface this page. Besides, if we venture into the "Thirteenth Arrondissement," we must needs adopt its picturesque language.

Monsieur de Rochefide, like all small minds, was constantly in fear of being bled. From the beginning of his attachment to Madame Schontz, Arthur was on his guard, and was at that time a dreadful screw, *très rat*, to use another slang word of the studio and the brothel. This word *rat* (which in French has many slang uses) when applied to a young girl means the person entertained, but applied to a man means the stingy entertainer. Madame Schontz had too much intelligence, and knew men too thoroughly, not to found high hopes on such a beginning. Monsieur de Rochefide allowed Madame Schontz five hundred francs a month, furnished, meagrely enough, a set of rooms at twelve hundred francs a year on the second floor of a house in the Rue Coquenard, and set himself to study Aurélie's character,

and she, finding herself spied upon, gave him character to study.

Rochefide was delighted to have come across a woman of such a noble nature, but it did not astonish him; her mother was a Barnheim of Baden, quite a lady! And then Aurélie had been so well brought up! Speaking English, German, and Italian, she was versed in foreign literature; she could pit herself, without discomfiture, against pianists of the second class. And, note the point! she behaved as regarded her talents like a woman of breeding; she never talked about them. In a painter's studio she would take up a brush in fun, and sketch a head with so much *go* as to amaze the company. As a pastime, when she was pining as a school teacher, she had dabbled in some sciences, but her life as a kept mistress had sown salt over all this good seed, and, of course, she laid the flower of these precious growths, revived for him, at Arthur's feet. Thus did Aurélie at first make a display of disinterestedness to match the pleasures she could give which enabled this light corvette to cast her grappling-irons firmly on board the statelier craft. Still, even at the end of the first year, she made a vulgar noise in the anteroom, managing to come in just when the Marquis was waiting for her, and tried to hide the disgracefully muddy hem of her gown in such a way as to make it more conspicuous. In short, she so cleverly contrived to persuade her *Gros Papa* that her utmost ambition, after so many vicissitudes, was to enjoy a simple, middle-class existence, that by the end of ten months the second phase of their connection began.

Then Madame Schontz had a fine apartment in the Rue Saint-Georges. Arthur, who could no longer conceal from her the fact of his wealth, gave her handsome furniture, a service of plate, twelve hundred francs a month, and a little low carriage, with a single horse, by the week, and he granted her a little groom with a fairly good grace. She knew what this munificence was worth; she detected the motives of her Arthur's conduct, and saw in them the cal-

culations of a close-fisted man. Tired of living at restaurants, where the food is generally execrable, where the simplest dinner of any refinement costs sixty francs and two hundred for a party of four friends, Rochefide offered Madame Schontz forty francs a day for his dinner and a friend's, wine included. Aurélie had no mind to refuse. After getting all her moral bills of exchange accepted, drawn on Monsieur de Rochefide's habits at a year's date, she was favorably heard when she asked for five hundred francs a year more for dress, on the plea that her *Gros Papa*, whose friends all belonged to the Jockey Club, might not be ashamed of her.

"A pretty thing, indeed," said she, "if Rastignac, Maxime de Trailles, la Roche-Hugon, Ronquerolles, Laginski, Lenoncourt, and the rest should see you with a Madame Everard! Put your trust in me, *Gros Père*, and you will be the gainer."

And Aurélie did, in fact, lay herself out for a fresh display of virtues in these new circumstances. She sketched a part for herself as the housewife, in which she won ample credit. She made both ends meet, said she, at the end of the month, and had no debts, on two thousand five hundred francs, such a thing as had never been seen in the Faubourg Saint-Germain of the Thirteenth Arrondissement—the upper ten of the demireps world; and she gave dinners infinitely better than Nucingen's, with first-class wines at ten and twelve francs a bottle. So that Rochefide, amazed and delighted to be able to ask his friends pretty often to his mistress's house as a matter of economy, would say to her, with his arm round her waist, "You are a perfect treasure!"

Before long he took a third share in an opera box for her, and at last went with her to first-night performances. He began to take counsel of his Aurélie, acknowledging the soundness of her advice; she allowed him to appropriate the wit she was always ready with; and her sallies, being new, won him the reputation for being an amusing man. At last he felt perfectly sure that she loved him truly, and for himself. Aurélie refused to make a Russian prince happy at the rate of five thousand francs a month.

"You are a happy man, my dear Marquis," cried old Prince Galathionne as they ended a rubber of whist at the club. "Yesterday, when you left us together, I tried to get her away from you; but 'Mon Prince,' said she, 'you are not handsomer than Rochefide though you are older; you would beat me, and he is like a father to me; show me then the quarter of a good reason for leaving him! I do not love Arthur with the crazy passion I had for the young rogues with patent-leather boots, whose bills I used to pay; but I love him as a wife loves her husband when she is a decent woman.'—And she showed me to the door."

This speech, which had no appearance of exaggeration, had the effect of adding considerably to the state of neglect and shabbiness that disfigured the home of the Rochefides. Ere long Arthur had transplanted his existence and his pleasures to Madame Schontz's lodgings, and found it answer; for by the end of three years he had four hundred thousand francs to invest.

Then began the third phase. Madame Schontz became the kindest of mothers to Arthur's son; she fetched him from school and took him back herself; she loaded him with presents, sweetmeats, and pocket-money; and the child, who adored her, called her his "little mamma." She advised her Arthur in the management of his money matters, making him buy consols at the fall before the famous treaty of London, which led to the overthrow of the Ministry on the 1st of March. Arthur made two hundred thousand francs, and Aurélie did not ask for a sou. Rochefide, being a gentleman, invested his six hundred thousand francs in Bank bills, half of them in the name of Mademoiselle Joséphine Schiltz.

A small house, rented in the Rue de la Bruyère, was placed in the hands of Grindot, that great architect on a small scale, with instructions to make it a delicious jewel case. Thenceforth Rochefide left everything in the hands of Madame Schontz, who received the dividends and paid the bills. Thus installed in his wife's place, she justified

him by making her *Gros Papa* happier than ever. She understood his whims, and satisfied them, as Madame de Pompadour humored the fancies of Louis XV. She was, in fact, *maîtresse en titre*—absolute mistress.

She now allowed herself to patronize certain charming young men, artists and literary youths newly born to glory, who disowned the ancients and the moderns alike, and tried to achieve a great reputation by achieving nothing else. Madame Schontz's conduct, a master-work of tactics, shows her superior intelligence. In the first place, a party of ten or twelve young men amused Arthur, supplied him with witty sayings and shrewd opinions on every subject, and never cast any doubt on the fidelity of the mistress of the house; in the second place, they looked up to her as a highly intellectual woman. These living advertisements, these walking "puffs," reported that Madame Schontz was the most charming woman to be found on the border-land dividing the Thirteenth Arrondissement from the other twelve.

Her rivals, Suzanne Gaillard, who since 1838 had the advantage over her of being a legitimately married wife, Fannie Beaupré, Mariette, and Antonia, spread more than scandalous reports as to the beauty of these youths and the kindness with which Monsieur de Rochefide welcomed them. Madame Schontz, who could, she declared, give these ladies a start of three bad jokes and beat them, exclaimed one evening, at a supper given by Florine after an opera, when she had set forth to them her good fortune and her success, "Do thou likewise!" a retort which had been remembered against her. At this stage of her career Madame Schontz got the racers sold, in deference to certain considerations, which she owed no doubt to the critical acumen of Claude Vignon, a frequent visitor.

"I could quite understand," said she one day, after lashing the horses with her tongue, "that princes and rich men should take horse-breeding to heart, but for the good of the country, not for the childish satisfaction of a gambler's vanity. If you had stud stables on your estates and could breed

a thousand or twelve hundred horses, if each owner sent the best horse in his stable, and if every breeder in France and Navarre should compete every time, it would be a great and fine thing; but you buy a single horse, as the manager of a theatre engages his artists, you reduce an institution to the level of a game, you have a Bourse for legs as you have a Bourse for shares. It is degrading. Would you spend sixty thousand francs to see in the papers—'Monsieur de Rochefide's 'Lélia beat Monsieur le Duc de Rhétoré's Fleur-de-Genêt by a length—' Why, you had better give the money to a poet who will hand you down to immortality in verse or in prose, like the late lamented Montyon!"

By dint of such goading the Marquis was brought to see the hollowness of the turf; he saved his sixty thousand francs; and next year Madame Schontz could say to him; "I cost you nothing now, Arthur."

Many rich men envied the Marquis his Aurélie, and tried to win her from him; but, like the Russian prince, they wasted their old age.

"Listen to me, my dear fellow," she had said a fortnight ago to Finot, now a very rich man, "I know that Rochefide would forgive me for a little flirtation if I really fell in love with another man, but no woman would give up a marquis who is such a thorough good fellow to take up with a *parvenu* like you. You would never keep me in such a position as Arthur has placed me in. He has made me all but his wife, and half a lady, and you could never do as much for me even if you married me."

This was the last rivet that held the fortunate slave. The speech reached those absent ears for which it was intended.

Thus began the fourth phase, that of habit, the crowning victory of the plan of campaign which enables a woman of this stamp to say of the man, "I have him safe!" Rochefide, who had just bought a pretty house in the name of Mademoiselle Joséphine Schiltz, a mere trifle of eighty thousand

francs, had, at the time when the Duchess was laying her plans, come to the point when he was vain of his mistress, calling her Ninon II., and boasting of her strict honesty, her excellent manners, her information, and wit. He had concentrated his good and bad qualities, his tastes and pleasures all in Madame Schontz, and had reached that stage of life when from weariness, indifference, or philosophy a man changes no more, but is faithful to his wife or his mistress.

The importance to which Madame Schontz had risen in five years may be understood when it is said that to be introduced to her a man had to be mentioned to her some time in advance. She had refused to make the acquaintance of certain tiresome rich men, and others of fly-blown reputations; she made no exceptions to this strict rule but in the case of certain great aristocratic names.

"They have a right to be stupid," she would say, "because they are swells."

Ostensibly she possessed the three hundred thousand francs that Rochefide had given her, and that a thorough good fellow, a stockbroker named Gobenheim—the only stockbroker she allowed in her house—managed for her; but she also managed for herself a little private fortune of two hundred thousand francs, formed of her savings on her house allowance for three years, by constantly buying and selling with the three hundred thousand francs, which were all she would ever confess to.

"The more you make, the less you seem to have," Gobenheim remarked one day.

"Water is so dear!" said she.

This unrevealed store was increased by the jewelry and diamonds which Aurélie would wear for a month and then sell, and by money given her for fancies she had forgotten. When she was called rich, Madame Schontz would reply that, at present rates, three hundred thousand francs brought in twelve thousand francs, and that she had spent it all in the hard times of her life when Lousteau had been her lover.

Such method showed a plan; and Madame Schontz, you may be sure, had a plan. For the last two years she had been jealous of Madame du Bruel, and the desire to be married at the mairie and in church gnawed at her heart. Every social grade has its forbidden fruit, some little thing exaggerated by desire, till it seems as weighty as the globe. This ambition had, of course, its duplicate in the ambition of a second Arthur, whom watchfulness had entirely failed to discover. Bixiou would have it that the favorite was Léon de Lora; the painter believed that it was Bixiou, who was now past forty, and should be thinking of settling. Suspicion also fell on Victor de Vernisset, a young poet of the Canalis school, whose passion for Madame Schontz was a perfect madness; while the poet accused Stidmann, a sculptor, of being his favored rival. This artist, a very good-looking young man, worked for goldsmiths, for bronze dealers, and jewelers; he dreamed of being a Benvenuto Cellini. Claude Vignon, the young Comte de la Palferine, Gobenheim, Vermanton, a cynic philosopher, and other frequenters of this lively salon were suspected by turns, but all acquitted. No one was a match for Madame Schontz, not even Rochefide, who fancied she had a weakness for la Palférine, a clever youth; she was, in fact, virtuous in her own interests, and thought only of making a good match.

Only one man of equivocal repute was ever to be seen at Madame Schontz's, and that was Couture, who had more than once been howled at on the Bourse; but Couture was one of Madame Schontz's oldest friends, and she alone remained faithful to him. The false alarm of 1840 swept away this speculator's last capital; he had trusted to the 1st of March Ministry; Aurélie, seeing that luck was against him, made Rochefide play for the other side. It was she who spoke of the last overthrow of this inventor of premiums and joint-stock companies as a *Découture* (unripping a rip).

Couture, delighted to find a knife and fork laid for him at Aurélie's, and getting from Finot—the cleverest, or per-

haps the luckiest of parvenus—a few thousand-franc notes now and then, was the only man shrewd enough to offer his name to Madame Schontz, who studied him to ascertain whether this bold speculator would have strength enough to make a political career for himself, and gratitude enough not to desert his wife. A man of about forty-three years old, and worn for his age, Couture did not redeem the ill-repute of his name by his birth; he had little to say of his progenitors. Madame Schontz was lamenting the rarity of men of business capacity, when one day Couture himself introduced to her a provincial gentleman who happened to be provided with the two handles by which women hold this sort of pitcher when they mean not to drop it.

A sketch of this personage will be a portrait of a certain type of young man of the day. A digression will, in this case, be history.

In 1838 Fabien du Ronceret, the son of a President of the Chamber at the King's Court of Caen, having lost his father about a year before, came from Alençon, throwing up his appointment as magistrate, in which, as he said, his father had made him waste his time, and settled in Paris. His intention now was to get on in the world by cutting a dash, a Norman scheme somewhat difficult of accomplishment, since he had scarcely eight thousand francs a year, his mother still being alive and enjoying the life-interest of some fine house property in the heart of Alençon. This youth had already, in the course of various visits to Paris, tried his foot on the tight rope; he had discerned the weak point of the social stucco restoration of 1830, and meant to work on it for his own profit, following the lead of the sharpers of the middle class. To explain this, we must glance at one of the results of the new state of things.

Modern notions of equality, which in our day have assumed such extravagant proportions, have inevitably developed in private life—in a parallel line with political life—pride, conceit, and vanity, the three grand divisions of the social *I*. Fools wish to pass for clever men, clever

men want to be men of talent, men of talent expect to be treated as geniuses: as to the geniuses, they are more reasonable; they consent to be regarded as no more than demi-gods. This tendency of the spirit of the time, which in the Chamber of Deputies makes the manufacturer jealous of the statesman, and the administrator jealous of the poet, prompts fools to run down clever men, clever men to run down men of talent, men of talent to run down those who are a few inches higher than themselves, and the demi-gods to threaten institutions, the throne itself, in short, everything and everybody that does not worship them unconditionally.

As soon as a nation is so impolitic as to overthrow recognized social superiority, it opens the sluice-gates, through which rushes forthwith a torrent of second-rate ambitions, the least of which would fain be first. According to the democrats, its aristocracy was a disease, but a definite and circumscribed disease; it has exchanged this for ten armed and contending aristocracies, the worst possible state of things. To proclaim the equality of all is to declare the rights of the envious. We are enjoying now the Saturnalia of the Revolution transferred to the apparently peaceful sphere of intelligence, industry, and politics; it seems as though the reputations earned by hard work, good service, and talent were a privilege granted at the expense of the masses. The agrarian law will ere long be extended to the field of glory.

Thus, at no time have men demanded public recognition on more puerile grounds. They must be remarked at any cost for an affectation of devotion to the cause of Poland, to the penitential system, to the future prospects of released convicts, to that of small rogues under or over the age of twelve, to any kind of social quackery. These various manias give rise to spurious dignities—Presidents, Vice-presidents, and Secretaries of Societies, which, in Paris, outnumber the social questions to be solved. Society on a grand scale has been demolished to make way for a thousand small ones in the image of the dead one.

Do not all these parasitical organisms point to decomposition? Are they not the worms swarming in the carcass? All these social bodies are the daughters of one mother—Vanity. Not thus does Catholic charity act, or true benevolence; these study disease while healing its sores, and do not speechify in public on morbid symptoms for the mere pleasure of talking.

Fabien du Ronceret, without being a superior man, had divined, by the exercise of that acquisitive spirit peculiar to the Norman race, all the advantage he might take of this public distemper. Each age has its characteristic, which clever men trade on. Fabien's only aim was to get himself talked about.

"My dear fellow, a man must make his name known if he wants to get on," said he as he left, to du Bousquier, a friend of his father's, and the King of Alençon. "In six months I shall be better known than you."

This was how Fabien interpreted the spirit of his time; he did not rule it, he obeyed it.

He had first appeared in *bohemia*, a district of the moral topography of Paris (see "A Prince of Bohemia"), and was known as "The Heir," in consequence of a certain premeditated parade of extravagance. Du Ronceret had taken advantage of Couture's follies in behalf of pretty Madame Cadine—one of the newer actresses, who was considered extremely clever at the second-class theatres—for whom he had furnished a charming ground-floor apartment with a garden, in the Rue Blanche.

This was the way in which the men made acquaintance. The Norman, in search of ready-made luxury, bought the furniture from Couture, with all the decorative fixtures he could not remove from the rooms, a garden room for smoking in, with a veranda built of rustic woodwork, hung with Indian matting, and decorated with pottery, to get to the smoking-room in rainy weather. When the Heir was complimented on his rooms, he called them his den. The provincial took care not to mention that Grindot the architect

had lavished all his art there, as had Stidmann on the carvings, and Léon de Lora on the paintings; for his greatest fault was that form of conceit which goes so far as lying with a view to self-glorification.

The Heir put the finishing touch to this splendor by building a conservatory against a south wall, not because he loved flowers, but because he meant to attack public repute by means of horticulture. At this moment he had almost attained his end. As Vice-president of some gardening society, under the presidency of the Duc de Vissembourg, brother of the Prince de Chiavari, the younger son of the late Maréchal Vernon, he had been able to decorate the vice-presidential coat with the ribbon of the Legion of Honor after an exhibition of horticultural produce, which he opened by an address given out as his own, but purchased of Lousteau for five hundred francs. He was conspicuous by wearing a flower given to him by old Blondet of Alençon, Emile Blondet's father, which he said had bloomed in his conservatory.

But this triumph was nothing. Du Ronceret, who was anxious to pass as a man of superior intelligence, had schemed to ally himself with a set of famous men, to shine by a reflected light, a plan very difficult to carry out on the basis of an income of eight thousand francs. And, in fact, he had looked by turns, but in vain, to Bixiou, Stidmann, and Léon de Lora to introduce him to Madame Schontz, so as to become a member of that menagerie of lions of every degree. Then he dined Couture so often that Couture proved categorically to Madame Schontz that she had to admit such an eccentric specimen, were it only to secure him as one of those graceful unpaid messengers whom house-mistresses are glad to employ on the errands for which servants are unsuited.

By the end of the third evening Madame Schontz knew Fabien through and through, and said to herself, "If Couture does not serve my turn, I am perfectly certain of this man. My future life runs on wheels."

So this simpleton, laughed at by every one, was the man of her choice; but with a deliberate purpose which made the preference an insult, and the choice was never suspected from its utter improbability. Madame Schontz turned Fabien's brain by stolen smiles, by little scenes on the threshhold when she saw him out the last, if Monsieur de Rochefide spent the evening there. She constantly invited Fabien to be the third with Arthur in her box at the Italiens, or at first-night performances; excusing herself by saying that he had done her this or that service, and that she had no other way of returning it.

Men have a rivalry of conceit among themselves—in common indeed with women—in their desire to be loved for themselves. Hence of all flattering attachments, none is more highly valued than that of a Madame Schontz for the man she makes the object of her heart's affections in contrast with the other kind of love. Such a woman as Madame Schontz, who played at being a fine lady, and who was in truth a very superior woman, was, as she could not fail to be, a subject of pride to Fabien, who fell so desperately in love with her that he never appeared in her presence but in full dress, patent-leather boots, lemon-colored gloves, an embroidered and frilled shirt, an endless variety of waistcoats, in short, every external symptom of the sincerest adoration.

A month before the conference between the Duchess and the Abbé, Madame Schontz had confided the secret of her birth and her real name to Fabien, who could not understand the object of this disclosure. A fortnight later Madame Schontz, puzzled by the Norman's lack of comprehension, exclaimed to herself:

"Good heavens, what an idiot I am! Why, he believes that I am in love with him!"

So then she took him out for a drive in the Bois, in her carriage, for she had had a low phaeton with a pair of horses for a year past.

In the course of this public *tête-à-tête* she discussed the

question of her ultimate fate, and explained that she wished to get married.

"I have seven hundred thousand francs," said she; "and I may confess to you that if I could meet with a man of great ambition, who could understand me thoroughly, I would change my condition; for, do you know, the dream of my life is to be a good citizen's wife, connected with a respectable family, and to make my husband and children all very happy."

The Norman was content to be a favorite with Madame Schontz; but to marry her seemed madness beyond discussion to a bachelor of eight-and-thirty, of whom the revolution of July had made a Judge. Seeing his hesitation, Madame Schontz made the Heir a butt for the arrows of her wit, her irony, and her scorn, and turned to Couture. Within a week the speculator, tempted by a hint of her savings, offered her his hand, his heart, and his future prospects —all three of equal value.

Madame Schontz's manœuvres had reached this stage when Madame de Grandlieu began to inquire as to the manners and customs of this Béatrix of the Rue Saint-Georges.

Following the Abbé Brossette's advice, the Duchess begged the Marquis d'Ajuda to bring to her house that prince of political jugglers, the famous Comte de Trailles, the Archduke of bohemia, and the youngest of the young, though he was now fifty. Monsieur d'Ajuda arranged to dine with Maxime at the club in the Rue de Beaune, and proposed that they should go on together to play dummy whist with the Duc de Grandlieu, who, having had an attack of the gout before dinner, would be alone. Though the Duke's son-in-law, the Duchess's cousin, had every right to introduce him into a house where he had never yet set foot, Maxime de Trailles was under no misapprehension as to the invitation thus conveyed; he concluded that either the Duke or the Duchess wanted to make use of him. A not unimportant feature of the time is the club life, where

men gamble with others whom they would never receive in their own houses.

The Duke so far honored Maxime as to confess that he was ill; after fifteen games of whist he went to bed, leaving his wife with Maxime and d'Ajuda. The Duchess, supported by the Marquis, explained her plans to Monsieur de Trailles, and asked his assistance, while seeming only to ask his advice. Maxime listened to the end without saying anything decisive, and would not speak till the Duchess had asked him pointblank to help her.

"I quite understand the matter, Madame," said he, after giving her one of those looks—keen, astute, and comprehensive—by which these old hands can compromise their allies. "D'Ajuda will tell you that I, if any one in Paris, can manage this double business, without your appearing in it, without its being known even that I have been here this evening. But, first of all, we must settle the Preliminaries of Léoben. What do you propose to sacrifice for this end?"

"Everything that is required."

"Very good, Madame la Duchesse. Then as the reward of my services you will do me the honor of receiving here and giving your countenance to Madame la Comtesse de Trailles?"

"Are you married?" exclaimed d'Ajuda.

"I am going to be married in a fortnight to the only daughter of a wealthy family, but to the last degree middle class! It is a sacrifice to opinion; I am adopting the strictest principles of my government. I am casting my old skin.

"So you will understand, Madame la Duchesse, how important for me it would be that you and your family should take up my wife. I am quite certain to be elected deputy when my father-in-law retires from his post, as he intends doing, and I have been promised a diplomatic appointment that befits my new fortune.—I cannot see why my wife should not be as well received as Madame de Portenduère in a society of young wives where such stars are to be seen as Mesdames de la Bastie, Georges de Maufrigneuse, de l'Es-

torade, du Guénic, d'Ajuda, de Restaud, de Rastignac, and de Vandenesse. My wife is pretty, and I will undertake to wake her up.

"Does this meet your views, Madame la Duchesse?

"You are a religious woman; and if you say yes, your promise, which I know will be sacred, will help me immensely in my changed life. And it will be another good action!—Alas, I have long been the chief of a rascally crew; but I want to be quit of all that. After all, our arms are good: Azure, a chimera or, spouting fire, armed gules, scaled vert; a chief counter erminé; granted by Francis I., who thought it desirable to give a patent of nobility to Louis XI.'s groom of the chambers—and we have been counts since the time of Catherine de Medicis."

"I will receive and introduce your wife," said the Duchess solemnly, "and my family shall never turn their back on her, I give you my word."

"Oh, Madame la Duchesse," exclaimed Maxime, visibly touched, "if Monsieur le Duc will also condescend to treat me kindly, I promise you on my part to make your plan succeed with no great loss to yourself.—But," he went on, after a pause, "you must pledge yourself to obey my instructions. . . . This is the last intrigue of my bachelor life; it must be carried through with all the more care because it is a good action," he said, smiling.

"Obey?" said the Duchess. "But must I appear in all this?"

"Indeed, Madame, I will not compromise you," cried Maxime, "and I respect you too implicitly to ask for security. You have only to follow my advice. Thus, for instance, du Guénic must be carried off by his wife like a sacred object, and kept away for two years; she must take him to see Switzerland, Italy, Germany, the more strange lands the better—"

"Ah, that answers a fear expressed by my director," exclaimed the Duchess guilelessly, as she remembered the Abbé Brossette's judicious observation. Maxime and d'Ajuda

could not help smiling at the idea of this coincidence of heaven and hell.

"To prevent Madame de Rochefide from ever seeing Calyste again," she added, "we will all travel, Juste and his wife, Calyste and Sabine, and I. I will leave Clotilde with her father—"

"Do not let us shout 'Victory' just yet, Madame," said Maxime. "I foresee immense difficulties; I shall conquer them, no doubt. Your esteem and favor are a prize for which I will plunge through much dirt; but it will be—"

"Dirt!" said the Duchess, interrupting the modern *condottiere* with a face equally expressive of disgust and surprise.

"Ay, and you will have to step in it, Madame, since I act for you. Are you really so ignorant of the pitch of blindness to which Madame de Rochefide has brought your son-in-law? I know it, through Nathan and Canalis, between whom she was hesitating when Calyste threw himself into that lioness's maw. Béatrix has made the noble Breton believe that she never loved any one but him, that she is virtuous, that her attachment to Conti was of the head only, and that her heart and the rest had very little to do with it —a musical passion, in short. As to Rochefide, that was a matter of duty.

"So, you understand, she is virginal. And she proves it by forgetting her son; for a year past she has not made the smallest attempt to see him. The little Count is, in point of fact, nearly twelve years old, and he has found a mother in Madame Schontz; motherhood is the mania, as you know, of women of that stamp.

"Du Guénic would be cut in pieces, and let his wife be cut in pieces, for Béatrix. And do you suppose that it is easy to drag a man back from the depths of the abyss of credulity? Why, Madame, Shakespeare's Iago would waste all his handkerchiefs in such a task. It is generally imagined that Othello, his younger brother Orosmane, and Saint-Preux, and René, and Werther, and other lovers who are famous, typify love! Their icy-hearted creators never knew

what was meant by an absorbing passion, Molière alone had a suspicion of it.—Love, Madame la Duchesse, is not an attachment to a noble woman, to a Clarissa; a great achievement that, on my word!—Love is to say to one's self: 'The woman I worship is a wretch; she is deceiving me, she will deceive me again, she is an old hand, she smells of the burning pit!'—and to fly to her, to find the blue of heaven, the flowers of Paradise. That is how Molière loved, and how we love, we scamps and rips; for I can cry at the great scene in 'Arnolphe'! That is how your son-in-law loves Béatrix!

"I shall have some difficulty in getting Rochefide from Madame Schontz; however, Madame Schontz can, no doubt, be got to abet us; I will study her household. As to Calyste and Béatrix, it will need an axe to divide them, treachery of the best quality, infamy so base that your virtuous imagination could not go so low unless your director held your hand.—You have asked for the impossible, you shall have it. Still, in spite of my determination to employ the sword and fire, I cannot absolutely pledge myself to success. I know lovers who do not shrink under the most entire disenchantment. You are too virtuous to understand the power of women who have no virtue."

"Do not attempt these infamies till I shall have consulted the Abbé Brossette, to know how far I am involved in them," cried the Duchess, with an artlessness that revealed how selfish religion can be.

"You know nothing about it, my dear mother," said the Marquis d'Ajuda.

On the steps, while waiting for d'Ajuda's carriage to come up, the Marquis said to Maxime: "You have frightened our good Duchess."

"But she has no idea of the difficulty of the thing she wants done!—Are we going to the Jockey Club? Rochefide must ask me to dine to-morrow at Schontz's rooms; in the course of to-night my plans will be laid, and I shall have chosen the pawns in my chessboard that are to move in the game I mean to play. In the days of her splendor Béatrix

would have nothing to say to me; I will settle accounts with her, and avenge your sister-in-law so cruelly that perhaps she will think I have overdone it."

On the following day Rochefide told Madame Schontz that Maxime de Trailles was coming to dinner. This was to warn her to display the utmost luxury, and prepare the very best fare for this distinguished connoisseur, who was the terror of every woman of Madame Schontz's class; and she gave as much care to her toilet as to arranging her house in a fitting way to receive the great man.

In Paris there are almost as many royal heads as there are different arts or special sciences, faculties, or professions; the best of those who exercise each has a royal dignity proper to himself; he is revered and respected by his peers, who know the difficulties of his work, and admire unreservedly the man who can defy them. In the eyes of the corps de ballet and courtesans Maxime was an extremely powerful and capable man, for he had succeeded in being immensely loved. He was admired by everybody who knew how hard it is to live in Paris on decent terms with your creditors; and he had never had any rival in elegance, demeanor, and wit but the famous de Marsay, who had employed him on political missions. This is enough to account for his interview with the Duchess, his influence over Madame Schontz, and the authority of his tone in a conference he intended to hold on the Boulevard des Italiens with a young man, who was already famous, though recently introduced to the bohemia of Paris.

As he rose next morning, Maxime de Trailles heard Finot announced, to whom he had sent the night before; he begged him to arrange a fortuitous meeting at breakfast at the Café Anglais between Couture, Lousteau, and himself, where they would chat in his hearing. Finot, who was to Maxime de Trailles as a lieutenant in the presence of a Marshal of France, could refuse him nothing; it was indeed too dangerous to provoke this lion. So when Maxime came in to

breakfast, he found Finot and his two friends at a table; the conversation had already been directed toward the subject of Madame Schontz. Couture, cleverly steered by Finot and Lousteau, who, unknown to himself, was Finot's abettor, let out everything that the Comte de Trailles wanted to know about Madame Schontz.

By one o'clock, Maxime, chewing his toothpick, was talking to du Tillet on the steps of Tortoni's, where speculators form a little Bourse preliminary to real dealings on 'Change. He seemed to be absorbed in business, but he was waiting to see the young Comte de la Palférine, who must pass that way sooner or later. The Boulevard des Italiens is now what the Pont Neuf was in 1650; everybody who is anybody crosses it at least once a day.

In fact, within ten minutes, Maxime took his hand from du Tillet's arm, and nodding to the young Prince of bohemia, said with a smile, "Two words with you, Count!"

The rivals, one a setting star, the other a rising sun, took their seat on four chairs outside the Café de Paris. Maxime was careful to place himself at a sufficient distance from certain old fogies who, from sheer habit, plant themselves in a row against the wall after one in the afternoon, to dry out their rheumatic pains. He had ample reasons for distrusting these old men. (See "A Man of Business.")

"Have you any debts?" asked Maxime of the young man.

"If I had not, should I be worthy to succeed you?" replied la Palférine.

"When I ask you such a question, it is not to cast any doubt on the matter," said de Trailles. "I only want to know if they amount to a respectable sum-total, running into five or six."

"Five or six what?" said la Palférine.

"Six figures! Do you owe 50,000, 100,000?—My debts ran up to 600,000 francs."

La Palférine took off his hat with an air of mocking respect.

"If I had credit enough to borrow a hundred thousand francs," replied he, "I would cut my creditors and go to live at Venice in the midst of its masterpieces of painting, spending the evening at the theatre, the night with pretty women, and—"

"And at my age where would you be?"

"I should not last so long," replied the young Count.

Maxime returned his rival's civility by just raising his hat with an expression of comical gravity.

"That is another view of life," he replied, as a connoisseur answering a connoisseur. "Then you owe—?"

"Oh, a mere trifle, not worth confessing to an uncle, if I had one. He would disinherit me for such a contemptible sum; six thousand francs."

"Six thousand give one more trouble than a hundred thousand," said Maxime sententiously. "La Palférine, you have a bold wit, you have even more wit than boldness; you may go far and become a political personage. Look here—of all the men who have rushed into the career which I have run, and who have been pitted against me, you are the only one I ever liked."

La Palférine colored, so greatly was he flattered by this confession, made with gracious bluntness, by the greatest of Parisian adventurers. This instinct of vanity was a confession of inferiority which annoyed him; but Maxime understood the reaction easy to foresee in so clever a man, and did his best to correct it at once by placing himself at the young man's discretion.

"Will you do something for me now that I am retiring from the Olympian course by marrying, and marrying well? —I would do a good deal for you," he added.

"You make me very proud," said la Palférine; "this is to put the fable of the lion and the mouse into practice."

"In the first place, I will loan you twenty thousand francs," Maxime went on.

"Twenty thousand francs?—I knew that if I walked this Boulevard long enough—!" said la Palférine in a parenthesis.

"My dear boy, you must set yourself up in some sort of style," said Maxime, smiling. "Do not trot about on your two feet; set up six. Do as I have done; I never got lower than a tilbury—"

"But then you must want me to do something quite beyond my powers."

"No. Only to make a woman fall in love with you within a fortnight."

"A woman of the town?"

"Why?"

"That would be out of the question; but if she is a lady, quite a lady, and very clever—"

"She is a Marquise of the first water."

"You want her letters?" said the young Count.

"Ah, you are a man after my own heart!" cried Maxime. "No. That is not what is wanted."

"I am really to love her?"

"Yes, really and truly."

"If I am to go beyond æsthetics, it is quite impossible," said la Palférine. "With regard to women, you see, I have a kind of honesty; we may trick them, but not—"

"Then I have not been mistaken," exclaimed Maxime. "Do you suppose I am the man to scheme for some little tu'penny meanness? . . . No, you must go, you must dazzle and conquer. . . . I give you twenty thousand, and ten days to win in.—Till this evening at Madame Schontz's."

"I am dining there."

"Good," said Maxime. "By and by, when you want me, you will find me, Monsieur le Comte," he added, with the air of a king pledging his word rather than promising.

"The poor woman has done you some terrible mischief then?" asked la Palférine.

"Do not try to sound the depth of my waters, my son; but let me tell you that, if you succeed, you will secure such powerful interest that when you are tired of your

Bohemian life you may, like me, retire on the strength of a rich marriage."

"Does a time come, then, when we are tired of amusing ourselves," said la Palférine, "of being nothing, of living as the birds live, of hunting in Paris like wild men, and laughing at all that turns up?"

"We tire of everything, even of hell!" said Maxime with a laugh.—"Till this evening."

The two scamps, the old one and the young one, rose. As Maxime got into his one-horse cab, he said to himself:

"Madame d'Espard cannot endure Béatrix; she will help me.—To the Hotel Grandlieu," he cried to the coachman, seeing Rastignac pass. Find a great man without a weakness.

Maxime found the Duchess, Madame du Guénic, and Clotilde in tears.

"What has happened?" he asked the Duchess.

"Calyste did not come in—it is the first time, and my poor Sabine is in despair."

"Madame la Duchesse," said Maxime, drawing the pious lady into a window-bay, "in the name of God, who will judge us, do not breathe a word as to my devotion; pledge d'Ajuda to secrecy; never let Calyste know anything of our plots, or we shall fight a duel to the death. When I told you this would not cost you much, I meant that you would not have to spend any monstrous sum. I want about twenty thousand francs, but everything else is my business; you may have to find some good appointments—one Receiver-General's, perhaps."

The Duchess and Maxime left the room. When Madame de Grandlieu came back to her two daughters, she heard a fresh lament from Sabine, full of domestic details, even more heartbreaking than those which had put an end to the young wife's happiness.

"Be calm, my child," said the Duchess to her daughter, "Béatrix will pay dearly for all your tears and misery; she will endure ten humiliations for each one of yours."

Madame Schontz had sent word to Claude Vignon, who had frequently expressed a wish to make the acquaintance of Maxime de Trailles; she invited Couture, Fabien, Bixiou, Léon de Lora, la Palférine, and Nathan, whom Rochefide begged to have for Maxime's benefit. Thus she had a party of nine, all of the first water, excepting du Ronceret; but the Heir's Norman vanity and brutality were a match for Claude Vignon's literary force, for Nathan's poetry, la Palférine's acumen, Couture's keen eye to the main chance, Bixiou's wit, Finot's foresight, Maxime's depth, and Léon de Lora's genius.

Madame Schontz, who aimed at appearing young and handsome, fortified herself in such a toilet as women of that class alone can achieve—a point-lace cape of spider-web fineness, a blue velvet dress, of which the elegant bodice was buttoned with opals, her hair in smooth bands, and shining like ebony. Madame Schontz owed her fame as a beauty to the brilliancy and color of a warm, creamy complexion like a Créole's, a face full of original details, with the clean-cut, firm features—of which the Comtesse de Merlin was the most famous example and the most perennially young—peculiar perhaps to southern faces. Unluckily, since her life had been so calm, so easy, little Madame Schontz had grown decidedly fat. Her neck and shoulders, bewitchingly round, were getting coarse. Still, in France a woman's face is thought all-important, and a fine head will secure a long life to an ungraceful shape.

"My dear child," said Maxime as he came in and kissed Aurélie on the forehead, "Rochefide wanted me to see your home, where I have not yet been; it is almost worthy of his income of four hundred thousand francs. Well, he had less by fifty thousand a year when he first knew you; in less than five years you have gained for him as much as any other woman—Antonia, Malaga, Cadine, or Florentine—would have devoured."

"I am not a baggage—I am an artist!" said Madame

Schontz, with some dignity. "I hope to end by founding a family of respectable folk, as they say in the play."

"It is dreadful, we all getting married," said Maxime, dropping into a chair by the fire. "Here am I within a few days of making a Comtesse Maxime."

"Oh! how I should like to see her!" cried Madame Schontz.—"But allow me," she went on, "to introduce Monsieur Claude Vignon—Monsieur Claude Vignon, Monsieur de Trailles."

"Ah, it was you who let Camille Maupin—mine hostess of literature—go into a convent?" cried Maxime. "After you, God!—No one ever did me so much honor. Mademoiselle des Touches made a Louis XIV. of you, Monsieur."

"And this is how history is written!" said Claude Vignon. "Did you not know that her fortune was spent in releasing Monsieur du Guénic's estates? If she knew that Calyste had fallen into the arms of her ex-friend!—" Maxime kicked the critic's foot, looking at Monsieur de Rochefide, "on my word, I believe she would come out of her nunnery to snatch him from her."

"I declare, my dear Rochefide," said Maxime, finding that his warning had failed to check Claude Vignon, "in your place I would give my wife her fortune, that the world might not suppose that she had taken up Calyste for want of money."

"Maxime is right!" said Madame Schontz, looking at Arthur, who colored violently. "If I have saved you some thousand francs to invest, you could not spend them better. I should have secured the happiness of both husband and wife.—What a good-conduct stripe!"

"I never thought of it," replied the Marquis. "But it is true; one is a gentleman first, and a husband after."

"Let me advise you of the appropriate moment for your generosity," said Maxime.

"Arthur," said Aurélie, "Maxime is right. Our generous actions, you see, old boy, must be done as Couture's

shares must be sold," and she looked in the glass to see who was coming in, "in the nick of time."

Couture was followed by Finot, and in a few minutes all the guests were assembled in the handsome blue-and-gold drawing-room of the "Hotel Schontz," as the men called their place of meeting since Rochefide had bought it for his Ninon II. On seeing la Palférine come in the last, Maxime went up to him, drew him into a recess, and gave him the twenty banknotes.

"Above all, do not be stingy with them," said he, with the native grace of a spendthrift.

"No one knows so well as you how to double the value of what appears to be a gift," replied la Palférine.

"Then you agree?"

"Well, since I take the money!" replied the youth, with some pride and irony.

"Very well. Nathan, who is here, will take you within two days to call on the Marquise de Rochefide," said Maxime in his ear.

La Palférine jumped as he heard the name.

"Do not fail to declare yourself madly in love with her; and, to rouse no suspicions, drink—wine, liqueurs no end! I will tell Aurélie to put you next to Nathan. Only, my son, we must now meet every night on the Boulevard de la Madeleine, at one in the morning; you to report progress, and I to give you instructions."

"I will be there, master," said the young Count, with a bow.

"What makes you ask a fellow to dine with us who comes dressed like a waiter?" said Maxime to Madame Schontz in a whisper, and looking at du Ronceret.

"Have you never seen 'The Heir'? Du Ronceret, from Alençon."

"Monsieur," said Maxime to Fabien, "you must know my friend d'Esgrignon?"

"Victorien dropped the acquaintance long since," replied Fabien; "but we were very intimate as boys."

The dinner was such as can only be given in Paris, and in the houses of these perfectly reckless women, for their refined luxury amazes the most fastidious. It was at a supper of this kind, given by a rich and handsome courtesan like Madame Schontz, that Paganini declared that he had never eaten such food at the table of any sovereign, nor drunk such wine in any prince's house, nor heard such witty conversation, nor seen such attractive and tasteful magnificence.

Maxime and Madame Schontz were the first to return to the drawing-room, at about ten o'clock, leaving the other guests, who had ceased to veil their anecdotes, and who boasted of their powers, with sticky lips glued to liqueur-glasses that they could not empty.

"Well, pretty one," said Maxime, "you are quite right. Yes, I came to get something out of you. It is a serious matter; you must give up Arthur. But I will see that he gives you two hundred thousand francs."

"And why am I to give him up, poor old boy?"

"To marry that noodle, who came from Alençon on purpose. He has already been a Judge; I will get him made President of the Court in the place of old Blondet, who is nearly eighty-two, and if you know how to catch the wind, your husband will be elected deputy. You will be people of importance, and crush Madame la Comtesse du Bruel—"

"Never!" cried Madame Schontz; "she is a Countess."

"Is he of the stuff they make counts of?"

"Well, he has a coat-of-arms," said Aurélie, seeking a letter in a handsome bag that hung by the fireplace, and handing it to Maxime. "What does it all mean? There are combs on it."

"He bears: Quarterly, the first argent three combs gules, second and third three bunches of grapes with stems and leaves all proper, fourth azure four pens or, laid in fret. Motto, *Servir*, and a squire's helmet.—No great things! They were granted by Louis XV.—They must have had some haberdasher grandfather, the maternal ancestry made money in wine, and the du Ronceret who got the arms must

have been a registrar.—But if you succeed in throwing off Arthur, the du Roncerets shall be Barons at least, I promise you, my pretty pigeon. You see, child, you must lie in pickle for five or six years in the country if you want to bury la Schontz in Madame la Présidente. The rascal cast eyes at you, of which the meaning was quite clear; you have hooked him."

"No," said Aurélie. "When I offered him my hand, he was as quiet as brandy is in the market."

"I will make up his mind for him if he is tipsy. Go and see how they are all getting on."

"It is not worth the trouble of going. I hear no one but Bixiou giving one of his caricatures, to which nobody is listening; but I know my Arthur; he thinks it necessary to be polite to Bixiou, and he is staring at him still, even if his eyes are shut."

"Let us go back then."

"By the by, for whose benefit am I doing all this, Maxime?" said Madame Schontz suddenly.

"For Madame de Rochefide," replied Maxime bluntly. "It is impossible to patch up matters between her and Arthur so long as you keep hold of him. To her it is a matter of being at the head of her house and having four hundred thousand francs a year."

"And she only offers me two hundred thousand francs down? I will have three hundred thousand if she is at the bottom of it. What, I have taken every care of her brat and her husband, I have filled her place in every way, and she is to beat me down? Look here, my dear fellow, I shall then have just a million. And besides that, you promise me the Presidency of the Court at Alençon if only I can make up for Madame du Ronceret—"

"Right you are!" said Maxime.

"How I shall be bored in that little town!" said Aurélie philosophically. "I have heard so much about that part of the country from d'Esgrignon and Madame Val-Noble, that it is as though I had lived there already."

"But if I could promise you the help of the title?"

"Oh, Maxime, if you can really do that.—Ay, but the pigeon refuses to fly—"

"And he is very ugly, with his skin like a plum; he has bristles instead of whiskers, and looks like a wild boar, though he has eyes like a bird of prey. He will be the finest President ever seen.—Be easy! In ten minutes he will be singing you Isabelle's song in the fourth act of 'Robert le Diable,' 'Je suis à tes genoux.'—But you must undertake to send Arthur back to fall at Béatrix's feet."

"It is difficult, but among us we may manage it."

At about half-past ten the gentlemen came into the drawing-room to take coffee. In the position in which Madame Schontz, Couture, and du Ronceret found themselves, it is easy to imagine the effect that was produced on the ambitious Norman by the following conversation between Couture and Maxime in a corner, carried on indeed in an undertone that they might not be overheard, but which Fabien contrived to hear.

"My dear fellow, if you were wise, you would accept the place of Receiver-General in some out-of-the-way place; Madame de Rochefide would get it for you. Aurélie's million francs would enable you to deposit the security, and you would settle everything on her as your wife. Then, if you steered your boat cleverly, you would be made deputy, and the only premium I ask for having saved you will be your vote in the Chamber."

"I shall always be proud to serve under you."

"Oh, my boy, you have had a very close shave! Just fancy, Aurélie thought herself in love with that Norman from Alençon; she wanted to have him made a Baron, President of the Court in his native town, and officer of the Legion of Honor. The noodle never guessed what Madame Schontz was worth, and you owe your good fortune to her disgust; so do not give such a clever woman time to change her mind. For my part, I will go and put the irons in the fire."

So Maxime left Couture in the seventh heaven of happiness, and said to la Palférine, "Shall I take you with me, my son?"

By eleven o'clock Aurélie found herself left with Couture, Fabien, and Rochefide. Arthur was asleep in an armchair; Couture and Fabien were trying to outstay each other, but without success. Madame Schontz put an end to this contest by saying to Couture, "Till to-morrow, dear boy!" which he took in good part.

"Mademoiselle," said Fabien, in a low voice, "when you saw me so unready to respond to the proposal you made me indirectly, do not imagine that there was the smallest hesitation on my part; but you do not know my mother; she would never consent to my happiness . . ."

"You are of age to address her with a *sommation respectueuse*,[1] my dear fellow," retorted Aurélie insolently. "However, if you are afraid of mamma, you are not the man for my money."

"Josephine!" said the Heir affectionately, as he boldly put his right arm round Madame Schontz's waist, "I believed that you loved me."

"And what then?"

"I might perhaps pacify my mother, and gain more than her consent."

"How?"

"If you would use your influence—"

"To get you created Baron, officer of the Legion of Honor, and President of the Court, my boy—is that it?—Listen to me, I have done so many things in the course of my life that I am capable of being virtuous! I could be an honest woman, a loyal wife, and take my husband in tow to upper regions; but I insist on being so loved by him that not a glance, not a thought, shall ever be given to any heart but mine, not even in a wish. . . . How does that

[1] A legal form by which French sons can reduce the obstinacy of recalcitrant parents when they refuse their consent to a marriage.

do for you? Do not bind yourself rashly; it is for life, my boy."

"With a woman like you, done, without looking twice!" cried Fabien, as much intoxicated by a look as he was by the West Indian liqueurs.

"You shall never repent of that word, my brave boy; you shall be a peer of France.—As to that poor old chap," she went on, looking at Rochefide asleep, "it is a, double l, all, o-v-e-r, over—all over!"

She said it so cleverly, so prettily, that Fabien seized Madame Schontz and kissed her with an impulse of passion and joy, in which the intoxication of love and wine were second to that of happiness and ambition.

"But now, my dear child," said she, "you must remember henceforth to behave respectfully to your wife, not to play the lover, and to leave me to get out of my slough as decently as may be.—And Couture, who believed himself a rich man and Receiver-General!—"

"I have a horror of the man," said Fabien. "I wish I might never see him again!"

"I will have him here no more," said the courtesan with a little prudish air. "Now that we understand each other, my Fabien, go; it is one o'clock."

This little scene gave rise in the Schontz household, hitherto so perfectly happy, to a phase of domestic warfare between Arthur and Aurélie, such as any covert interest on the part of one of the partners is certain to give rise to.

The very next day Arthur woke to find himself alone; Madame Schontz was cold, as women of that sort know how to be.

"What happened last night?" asked he at breakfast, looking at Aurélie.

"That is the way of it, in Paris," said she. "You go to bed on a wet night, next morning the pavement is dry, and everything so frozen that the dust flies; would you like a brush?"

"But what ails you, dear little woman?"

"Go, go to your great gawk of a wife!"

"My wife?" cried the unhappy Marquis.

"Couldn't I guess why you brought Maxime here? You wanted to make it up with Madame de Rochefide, who wants you perhaps for some telltale baby.—And I, whom you think so cunning, was advising you to give her back her money!—Oh, I know your tricks. After five years my gentleman is tired of me. I am fat, Béatrix is bony; it will be a change. You are not the first man I have known with a taste for skeletons. Your Béatrix dresses well too, and you are one of the men who like a clothes-horse. Besides, you want to send Monsieur du Guénic packing. That would be a triumph! How well it will look! Won't it be talked about! You will be quite a hero!"

At two o'clock Madame Schontz had not come to an end of her ironical banter, in spite of Arthur's protestations. She said she was engaged to dine out. She desired the "faithless one" to go without her to the Italiens; she was going to a first-night performance at the Ambigu-Comique, and to make the acquaintance of a charming woman, Lousteau's mistress, Madame de la Baudraye.

To prove his eternal attachment to his little Aurélie, and his aversion for his wife, Arthur offered to set out the very next day for Italy, and to live as her husband in Rome, Naples, or Florence, whichever Aurélie might prefer, giving her sixty thousand francs a year.

"All that is pure whims," said she. "That will not hinder your making it up with your wife, and you will be wise to do so."

At the end of this formidable discussion, Arthur and Aurélie parted, he to play and dine at the club, she to dress and spend the evening *tête-à-tête* with Fabien.

Monsieur de Rochefide found Maxime at the club, and poured out his complaints, as a man who felt happiness being torn up from his heart by the roots that clung by every fibre. Maxime listened to the Marquis's lament as polite people can listen while thinking of something else.

"I am a capital counsellor in such cases, my dear fellow," said he. "Well, you make a great mistake in letting Aurélie see how much you care for her. Let me introduce you to Madame Antonia—a heart to let. You will see la Schontz sing very small. Why, she is seven-and-thirty, is your Schontz, and Antonia is but twenty-six! And such a woman! Her wits are not all in her brains, I can tell you. Indeed, she is my pupil. If Madame Schontz still struts out her pride, do you know what it means?"

"On my honor, no."

"That she means to get married; and then nothing can hinder her from throwing you over. After a six years' lease the woman has a right to do it.—But if you will listen to me, you can do better than that. At the present time your wife is worth a thousand Schontzes and Antonias of the Saint-Georges quarter. She will be hard to win, but not impossible; and she will make you as happy as Orgon! At any rate, if you do not wish to look like a fool, come to supper to-night at Antonia's."

"No, I love Aurélie too well; I will not allow her to have any cause for blaming me."

"Oh, my dear fellow! what a life you are making for yourself!" cried Maxime.

"It is eleven o'clock. She will have returned from the Ambigu," said Rochefide, going off. And he roared at the coachman to drive as fast as he could to the Rue de la Bruyère.

Madame Schontz had given distinct orders, and Monsieur was admitted exactly as though he and Madame were the best of friends; but Madame, informed of Monsieur's return, took care to let Monsieur hear the slam of her dressing-room door, shut as doors shut when a lady is taken by surprise. Then, on the corner of the piano, was Fabien's hat, intentionally forgotten, and conspicuously fetched away by the maid as soon as Monsieur and Madame were engaged in conversation.

"So you did not go to the play, little woman?"

"No, I changed my mind."

"And who has been here?" he asked quite simply, seeing the maid carry away the hat.

"Nobody."

To this audacious falsehood Arthur could only bow his head; this was passing under the Caudine forks of submission. True love has this magnanimous cowardice. Arthur behaved to Madame Schontz as Sabine did to Calyste, as Calyste did to Béatrix.

Within a week there was a change like that of a grub to a butterfly in the handsome and clever young Count, Charles-Edouard Rusticoli de la Palférine (the hero of the sketch called "A Prince of Bohemia," which makes it unnecessary to describe his person and character in this place). Hitherto he had lived very poorly, making up his deficits with the audacity of a Danton; now he paid his debts, by Maxime's advice he had a little low carriage, he was elected to the Jockey Club, to the club in the Rue de Grammont, he became superlatively elegant. Finally, he published in the "Journal des Débats" a novel which earned him in a few days such a reputation as professional writers do not achieve after many years of labor and success, for in Paris nothing is so vehement as what is to prove ephemeral. Nathan, perfectly certain that the Count would never write anything more, praised this elegant and impertinent youth to Madame de Rochefide in such terms that Béatrix, spurred on by the poet's account of him, expressed a wish to see this prince of fashionable vagabonds.

"He will be all the more delighted to come here," replied Nathan, "because I know he is so much in love with you as to commit any folly."

"But he has committed every folly already, I am told."

"Every folly? No," replied Nathan, "he has not yet been so foolish as to love a decent woman."

A few days after the plot of the Boulevard had been laid between Maxime and the seductive Count Charles-Edouard,

this young gentleman, on whom Nature had bestowed—in irony, no doubt—a pathetically melancholy countenance, made his first incursion into the nest in the Rue de Courcelles, where the dove, to receive him, fixed an evening when Calyste was obliged to go out with his wife. If ever you meet la Palférine—or when you come to the "Prince of Bohemia" in the third part of this long picture of modern manners—you will at once understand the triumph achieved in a single evening by that sparkling wit, those astonishing high spirits, especially if you can conceive of the capital byplay of the sponsor who agreed to second him on this occasion. Nathan was a good fellow; he showed off the young Count as a jeweller shows off a necklace he wants to sell, by making the stones sparkle in the light.

La Palférine discreetly was the first to leave; he left Nathan and the Marquise together, trusting to the great author's co-operation, which was admirable. Seeing the Marquise quite amazed, he fired her fancy by a certain reticence, which stirred in her such chords of curiosity as she did not know existed in her. Nathan gave her to understand that it was not so much la Palférine's wit that won him his successes with women as his superior gifts in the art of love; and he cried him up beyond measure.

This is the place for setting forth a novel result of the great law of contrasts, which gives rise to many a crisis in the human heart, and accounts for so many vagaries that we are forced to refer to it sometimes, as well as to the law of affinities. Courtesans—including all that portion of the female sex which is named, unnamed, and renamed every quarter of a century—all preserve, in the depths of their hearts, a vigorous wish to recover their liberty, to feel a pure, saintly, and heroic love for some man to whom they can sacrifice everything. (See "A Harlot's Progress.") They feel this antithetical need so keenly that it is rare to find a woman of the kind who has not many times aspired to become virtuous through love. The most frightful deception cannot discourage them. Women who are, on the contrary, re-

strained by education, and by their rank in life, fettered by the dignity of their family, living in the midst of wealth, crowned by a halo of virtue, are tempted—secretly, of course—to try the tropical regions of passion. These two antagonistic types of women have, at the bottom of their hearts, the one a little craving for virtue, the other a little craving for dissipation, which Jean-Jacques Rousseau first had the courage to point out. In those it is the last gleam of the divine light not yet extinct; in these it is a trace of the primitive clay.

This remaining claw of the beast was tickled, this hair of the devil was pulled with the greatest skill, by Nathan. The Marquise seriously wondered whether she had not hitherto been the dupe of her intellect, whether her education was complete. Vice!—is perhaps the desire to know everything.

Next day Calyste was seen by Béatrix as what he was—a perfect and loyal gentleman, devoid of spirit and wit.

In Paris, to be known as a wit, a man's wit must flow as water flows from a spring; for all men of fashion, and Parisians in general, are witty. But Calyste was too much in love, he was too much absorbed to observe the change in Béatrix, and satisfy her by opening up fresh veins; he was very colorless in the reflected light of the previous evening, and could not give the greedy Béatrix the smallest excitement. A great love is a credit account open to such voracious drafts on it that the moment of bankruptcy is inevitable.

In spite of the weariness of this day—the day when a woman is bored by her lover!—Béatrix shuddered with fears as she thought of a duel between la Palférine, the successor of Maxime de Trailles, and Calyste du Guénic, a brave man without brag. She therefore hesitated to see the young Count any more; but the knot was cut by a simple incident. Béatrix had a third share in a box at the Italiens—a dark box on the pit tier where she might not be seen. For some few days Calyste had been so bold as to accompany the Marquise and sit behind her, timing their arrival late enough to attract no attention. Béatrix was always one of the first

to leave before the end of the last act, and Calyste escorted her, keeping an eye on her, though old Antoine was in waiting on his mistress.

Maxime and la Palférine studied these tactics, dictated by the proprieties, by the love of concealment characteristic of the "Eternal Baby," and also by a dread that weighs on every woman who, having once been a constellation of fashion, has fallen for love from her rank in the zodiac. She then fears humiliation as a worse agony than death; but this agony of pride, this shipwreck, which women who have kept their place on Olympus inflict on those who have fallen, came upon her, by Maxime's contriving, under the most horrible circumstances.

At a performance of "Lucia," which ended, as is well known, by one of Rubini's greatest triumphs, Madame de Rochefide, before she was called by Antoine, came out from the corridor into the vestibule of the theatre, where the stairs were crowded with pretty women, grouped on the steps, or standing in knots till their servants should bring up their carriages. Béatrix was at once recognized by all; a whisper ran through every group, rising to a murmur. In the twinkling of an eye every woman vanished; the Marquise was left alone as if plague-stricken. Calyste, seeing his wife on one of the staircases, dared not join the outcast, and it was in vain that Béatrix twice gave him a tearful look, an entreaty to come to her support. At that moment la Palférine, elegant, lordly, and charming, quitted two other women, and came, with a bow, to talk to the Marquise.

"Take my arm and come defiantly with me; I can find your carriage," said he.

"Will you finish the evening with me?" she replied, as she got into her carriage and made room for him by her side.

La Palférine said to his groom, "Follow Madame's carriage," and got in with Madame de Rochefide, to Calyste's amazement. He was left standing, planted on his feet as though they were made of lead, for it was on seeing him looking pale and blank that Béatrix had invited the young

Count to accompany her. Every dove is a Robespierre in white feathers.

Three carriages arrived together at the Rue de Courcelles with lightning swiftness—Calyste's, la Palférine's, and the Marquise's.

"So you are here?" said Béatrix, on going into her drawing-room leaning on the young Count's arm, and finding Calyste already there, his horse having outdistanced the other two carriages.

"So you are acquainted with this gentleman!" said Calyste to Béatrix with suppressed fury.

"Monsieur le Comte de la Palférine was introduced to me by Nathan ten days ago," said Béatrix; "and you, Monsieur, have known me for four years—"

"And I am ready, Madame," said la Palférine, "to make Madame d'Espard repent of having been the first to turn her back on you—down to her grandchildren—"

"Oh, it was *she?*" cried Béatrix. "I will pay her out."

"If you want to be revenged, you must win back your husband, but I am prepared to bring him back to you," said la Palférine in her ear.

The conversation thus begun was carried on till two in the morning, without giving Calyste an opportunity of speaking two words apart to Béatrix, who constantly kept his rage in subjection by her glances. La Palférine, who was not in love with her, was as superior in good taste, wit, and charm as Calyste was beneath himself; writhing on his seat like a worm cut in two, and thrice starting to his feet with an impulse to stop la Palférine. The third time that Calyste flew at his rival, the Count said, "Are you in pain, Monsieur?" in a tone that made Calyste sit down on the nearest chair and remain as immovable as an image.

The Marquise chatted with the light ease of a Célimène, ignoring Calyste's presence. La Palférine was so supremely clever as to depart on a last witty speech, leaving the two lovers at war.

Thus, by Maxime's skill, the flames of discord were raging in the divided households of Monsieur and Madame de Rochefide.

On the morrow, having heard from la Palférine, at the Jockey Club, where the young Count was playing whist with great profit, of the success of the scene he had plotted, Maxime went to the Hotel Schontz to ascertain how Aurélie was managing her affairs.

"My dear fellow," cried Madame Schontz, laughing as she saw him, "I am at my wits' end. I am closing my career with the discovery that it is a misfortune to be clever."

"Explain your meaning."

"In the first place, my dear friend, I kept my Arthur for a week on a regimen of kicking his shins, with the most patriotic old stories and the most unpleasant discipline known in our profession. 'You are ill,' said he with fatherly mildness, 'for I have never been anything but kind to you, and I perfectly adore you.'—'You have one fault, my dear,' said I; 'you bore me.'—'Well, but have you not all the cleverest men and the handsomest young fellows in Paris to amuse you?' said the poor man. I was shut up. Then I felt that I loved him."

"Hah!" said Maxime.

"What is to be done? These ways are too much for us; it is impossible to resist them. Then I changed the stop; I made eyes at that wild boar of a lawyer, my future husband, as great a sheep now as Arthur; I made him sit there in Rochefide's armchair, and I thought him a perfect fool. How bored I was!—But, of course, I had to keep Fabien there that we might be discovered together—"

"Well," cried Maxime, "get on with your story! When Rochefide found you together, what next?"

"You would never guess, my good fellow. By your instructions the banns are published, the marriage contract is being drawn, Notre-Dame de Lorette is out of court. When it is a case of matrimony, something may be paid on account.—When he found us together, Fabien and me, poor

Arthur stole off on tiptoe to the dining-room, and began growling and clearing his throat and knocking the chairs about. That great gaby Fabien, to whom I cannot tell everything, was frightened, and that, my dear Maxime, is the point we have reached.—Why, if Arthur should find the couple of us some morning on coming into my room, he is capable of saying, 'Have you had a pleasant night, children?' "

Maxime nodded his head, and for some minutes sat twirling his cane.

"I know the sort of man," said he. "This is what you must do; there is no help for it but to throw Arthur out the window and keep the door tightly shut. You must begin again the same scene with Fabien—"

"How intolerable! For, after all, you see, the sacrament has not yet blessed me with virtue . . ."

"You must contrive to catch Arthur's eye when he finds you together," Maxime went on; "if he gets angry, there is an end of the matter. If he only growls as before, there is yet more an end of it."

"How?"

"Well, you must be angry; you must say, 'I thought you loved and valued me; but you have ceased to care for me; you feel no jealousy—' but you know it all, chapter and verse. —'Under such circumstances Maxime' (drag me in) 'would kill his man on the spot' (and cry). 'And Fabien' (make him ashamed of himself by comparing him with Fabien)—'Fabien would have a dagger ready to stab you to the heart. That is what I call love! There, go! Good-night, good-by! Take back your house; I am going to marry Fabien. He will give me his name, he will! He has thrown over his old mother!'—In short, you—"

"Of course, of course! I will be magnificent!" cried Madame Schontz. "Ah, Maxime! There will never be but one Maxime, as there never was but one de Marsay."

"La Palférine is greater than I," said de Trailles modestly. "He is getting on famously."

"He has a tongue, but you have backbone and a grip.

How many people have you kept going! How many have you doubled up!"

"La Palférine has every qualification; he is deep and well informed, while I am ignorant," replied Maxime.—"I have seen Rastignac, who came to terms at once with the Keeper of the Seals. Fabien will be made President of the Court and officer of the Legion of Honor after a year's probation."

"I will take up religion," replied Madame Schontz, emphasizing the phrase so as to win an approving look from Maxime.

"Priests are worth a hundred of us!" said Maxime.

"Really?" said Aurélie. "Then I may find some one to talk to in a country town.—I have begun my part. Fabien has already told his mother that grace has dawned on me, and he has bewitched the good woman with my million and his Presidency; she agrees that we are to live with her; she asked for a portrait of me, and has sent me hers; if Love were to look at it, he would fall backward.—Go then, Maxime; I will demolish the poor man this evening. It goes to my heart."

Two days later la Palférine and Maxime met at the door of the Jockey Club.

"It is done," said Charles-Edouard.

The words, containing a whole horrible and terrible drama, such as vengeance often carries out, made the Comte de Trailles smile.

"We shall have all de Rochefide's jeremiads," said Maxime, "for you and Aurélie have finished together. Aurélie has turned Arthur out of doors, and now we must get hold of him. He is to give three hundred thousand francs to Madame du Ronceret and return to his wife. We will prove to him that Béatrix is superior to Aurélie."

"We have at least ten days before us," said Charles-Edouard sapiently, "and not too much in all conscience; for now I know the Marquise, and the poor man will be handsomely fleeced."

"What will you do when the bomb bursts?"

"We can always be clever when we have time to think it out; I am grand when I am able to prepare for it."

The two gamblers went into the drawing-room together, and found the Marquis de Rochefide looking two years older; he had no stays on; he had sacrificed his elegance; his beard had grown.

"Well, my dear Marquis?" said Maxime.

"Oh, my dear fellow, my life is broken . . ." and for ten minutes Arthur talked, and Maxime gravely listened; he was thinking of his marriage, which was to take place a week hence.

"My dear Arthur, I advised you of the only means I knew of to keep Aurélie, and you did not choose . . ."

"What means?"

"Did I not advise you to go to supper with Antonia?"

"Quite true.—How can I help it? I love her.—And you, you make love as Grisier fences."

"Listen to me, Arthur; give her three hundred thousand francs for her little house, and I promise you I will find you something better.—I will speak to you again of the unknown fair one by and by; I see d'Ajuda, who wants to say two words to me."

And Maxime left the inconsolable man to talk to the representative of the family needing consolation.

"My dear fellow," said the other Marquis in an undertone, "the Duchess is in despair; Calyste has quietly packed up and procured a passport. Sabine wants to follow the fugitives, catch Béatrix, and claw her. She is expecting another child; and the whole thing looks rather murderous, for she has gone quite openly and bought pistols."

"Tell the Duchess that Madame de Rochefide is not going, and within a fortnight the whole thing will be settled. Now, d'Ajuda, your hand on it? Neither you nor I have said anything or known anything. We shall admire the effects of chance."

"The Duchess has already made me swear secrecy on the Gospels and the Cross."

"You will receive my wife a month hence?"

"With pleasure."

"Everybody will be satisfied," replied Maxime. "Only warn the Duchess that something is about to happen which will delay her departure for Italy for six weeks; it concerns Monsieur du Guénic. You will know all about it later."

"What is it?" asked d'Ajuda, who was looking at la Palférine.

"Socrates said before his death, 'We owe a cock to Æsculapius.' But your brother-in-law will be let off for the comb," replied la Palférine without hesitation.

For ten days Calyste endured the burden of a woman's anger, all the more implacable because it was seconded by a real passion. Béatrix felt that form of love so roughly but truly described to the Duchess by Maxime de Trailles. Perhaps there is no highly organized being that does not experience this overwhelming passion once in a lifetime. The Marquise felt herself quelled by a superior force, by a young man who was not impressed by her rank, who, being of as noble birth as herself, could look at her with a calm and powerful eye, and from whom her greatest feminine efforts could scarcely extract a smile of admiration. Finally, she was crushed by a tyrant, who always left her bathed in tears, deeply hurt, and believing herself wronged. Charles-Edouard played the same farce on Madame de Rochefide that she had been playing these six months on Calyste.

Since the scene of her mortification at the Italiens, Béatrix had adhered to one formula: "You preferred the world and your wife to me, so you do not love me. If you wish to prove that you do love me, sacrifice your wife and the world. Give up Sabine, leave her, and let us go to live in Switzerland, in Italy, or in Germany."

Justifying herself by this cool ultimatum, she had established the sort of blockade which women carry into effect by cold looks, scornful shrugs, and a face like a stone citadel. She believed herself rid of Calyste; she thought he would never venture on a breach with the Grandlieus. To give up

Sabine, to whom Mademoiselle des Touches had given her fortune, meant poverty for him.

However, Calyste, mad with despair, had secretly procured a passport, and begged his mother to forward to him a considerable sum. While waiting for the money to reach him, he kept watch over Béatrix, himself a victim to the jealousy of a Breton. At last, nine days after the fateful communication made by la Palférine to Maxime at the club, the Baron, to whom his mother had sent thirty thousand francs, flew to the Rue de Courcelles, determined to force the blockade, to turn out la Palférine, and to leave Paris with his idol appeased.

This was one of those fearful alternatives when a woman who has preserved a fragment of self-respect may sink forever into the depths of vice, but may, on the other hand, return to virtue. Hitherto Madame de Rochefide had regarded herself as a virtuous woman, whose heart had been invaded by two passions; but to love Charles-Edouard, and allow herself to be loved by Calyste, would wreck her self-esteem; for where falsehood begins, infamy begins. She had granted rights to Calyste, and no human power could hinder the Breton from throwing himself at her feet and watering them with the tears of abject repentance. Many persons wonder to see the icy insensibility under which women smother their passions; but if they could not thus blot out the past, life for them would be bereft of dignity; they could never escape from the inevitable collusion to which they had once succumbed.

In her entirely new position Béatrix would have been saved if la Palférine had come to her; but old Antoine's alertness was her ruin.

On hearing a carriage stop at the door, she exclaimed to Calyste, "Here are visitors!" and she hurried away to prevent a catastrophe.

Antoine, a prudent man, replied to Charles-Edouard, who had called solely to hear these very words, "Madame is gone out."

When Béatrix heard from the old servant that the young Count had called, and what he had been told, she said, "Quite right," and returned to the drawing-room, saying to herself, "I will be a nun!"

Calyste, who had made so bold as to open the window, caught sight of his rival.

"Who was it?" he asked.

"I do not know; Antoine has not come up yet."

"It was la Palférine—"

"Very possibly."

"You love him, and that is why you find fault with me. —I saw him!"

"You saw him?"

"I opened the window."

Béatrix dropped half dead on the sofa. Then she tried to temporize to save the future; she put off their departure for ten days on the plea of business, and vowed to herself that she would close her door against Calyste if only she could pacify la Palférine, for these are the horrible compromises and burning torments that underlie lives that have gone off the rails on which the great train of Society runs.

As soon as Béatrix was alone she felt so miserable, so deeply humiliated, that she went to bed; she was ill; the fearful struggle that rent her heart seemed to leave a horrible reaction, and she sent for the doctor; but, at the same time, she despatched to la Palférine the following note, in which she avenged herself on Calyste with a sort of frenzy:

"Come to see me, my friend, I am in desperation. Antoine turned you away when your visit would have put an end to one of the most horrible nightmares of my life, by rescuing me from a man I hate, whom I hope never to see again. I love no one on earth but you, and I never shall love any one but you, though I am so unhappy as not to please you so much as I could wish . . ."

She covered four pages, which, having begun thus, ended in a rhapsody far too poetical to be reproduced in print, in

which Béatrix so effectually compromised herself that in conclusion she said: "Am I not wholly at your mercy? Ah, no price would be too great for me to prove how dearly you are loved!"

And she signed her name, a thing she had never done for either Calyste or Conti.

On the following day, when the young Count called on the Marquise, she was taking a bath. Antoine begged him to wait. But he dismissed Calyste in his turn, when, starving with passion, he also came early; and la Palférine could see him as he got into his carriage again in despair.

"Oh, Charles," said the Marquise, coming into the drawing-room, "you have ruined me!"

"I know it, Madame," replied he coolly. "You swore that you loved me alone, you offered to give me a letter in which you will set down the reasons you would have had for killing yourself, so that in the event of your being unfaithful to me I might poison you without fear of human justice—as if superior souls needed to resort to poison to avenge themselves!—You wrote, 'No price would be too great for me to prove how dearly you are loved!'—Well, I find a contradiction between these closing words of your letter and your speech, 'You have ruined me.' I will know now whether you have had the courage to break with du Guénic."

"You are revenged on him beforehand," said she, throwing her arms round his neck. "And that matter is enough to bind you and me forever—"

"Madame," said the Prince of bohemia coldly, "if you desire my friendship, I consent; but there are conditions—"

"Conditions?"

"Yes, conditions—as follows: You must be reconciled with Monsieur de Rochefide, resume the honors of your position, return to your fine house in the Rue d'Anjou—you will be one of the queens of Paris. You can achieve this by making Rochefide play a part in politics and guiding your conduct with such skill and tenacity as Madame d'Espard has

displayed. This is the position which any woman must fill whom I am to honor with my devotion—"

"But you forget that Monsieur de Rochefide's consent is necessary."

"Oh, my dear child," replied la Palférine, "we have prepared him for it. I have pledged my honor as a gentleman that you were worth all the Schontzes of the Quartier Saint-Georges put together, and you owe it to my honor—"

For eight days, every day, Calyste called on Béatrix, and was invariably sent away by Antoine, who put on a grave face and assured him, "Madame la Marquise is seriously ill."

From thence Calyste rushed off to la Palférine, whose servant always explained, "Monsieur le Comte is gone hunting." And each time Calyste left a letter for the Count.

At last, on the ninth day, Calyste, in reply to a note from la Palférine fixing a time for an explanation, found him at home, but with him Maxime de Trailles, to whom the younger rake wished, no doubt, to give proof of his abilities by getting him to witness the scene.

"Monsieur le Baron," said Charles-Edouard quietly, "here are the six notes you have done me the honor of writing to me. They are unopened, just as you sent them; I knew beforehand what might be in them when I heard that you had been seeking me everywhere since the day when I looked at you out of the window, while you were at the door of a house where, on the previous day, I had been at the door while you were at the window. I thought it best to remain ignorant of an ill-judged challenge. Between you and me, you have too much good taste to owe a woman a grudge because she has ceased to love you. And to fight your preferred rival is a bad way to reinstate yourself.

"Also, in the present case, your letters were invalidated, null and void, as lawyers say, in consequence of a radical error: you have too much good sense to quarrel with a husband for taking back his wife. Monsieur de Rochefide feels that the Marquise's position is undignified. You will no

longer find Madame de Rochefide in the Rue de Courcelles; six months hence, next winter, you will see her in her husband's home. You very rashly thrust yourself into the midst of a reconciliation between a married couple, to which you yourself gave rise by failing to shelter Madame de Rochefide from the mortification she endured at the opera-house. As we left, Béatrix, to whom I had already brought some friendly advances on her husband's part, took me in her carriage, and her first words were, 'Go and bring Arthur!' "

"Oh, Heavens!" cried Calyste, "she was right; I had failed in my devotion—"

"But, unfortunately, Monsieur, poor Arthur was living with one of those dreadful women—that Madame Schontz, who for a long time had expected every hour to find herself deserted. Madame Schontz, who, on the strength of Béatrix's complexion, cherished a desire to see herself some day the Marquise de Rochefide, was furious when she saw her castles in the air fallen. Those women, Monsieur, will lose an eye if they can spoil two for an enemy; la Schontz, who has just left Paris, has been the instrument of spoiling six! And if I had been so rash as to love Béatrix, the sum-total would have been eight. You, Monsieur, must have discovered that you need an oculist."

Maxime could not help smiling at the change in Calyste's face; he turned pale as his eyes were opened to the situation.

"Would you believe, Monsieur le Baron, that that wretched woman has consented to marry the man who furnished her with means of revenge? Oh! women!—You understand now why Béatrix should shut herself up with Arthur for a few months at Nogent-sur-Marne, where they have a charming little house; they will recover their sight there. Meanwhile their house will be entirely redecorated; the Marquise means to display a princely style of splendor. When a man is sincerely in love with so noble a woman, so great, so exquisite, the victim of conjugal devotion, as soon as she has the courage to return to her du-

ties as a wife, the part of those who adore her as you do, who admire her as I do, is to remain her friends when they can be nothing more.

"You will forgive me for having thought it well to invite Monsieur de Trailles to be present at this explanation, but I was particularly anxious to make this all perfectly clear. For my part, I especially wished to assure you that, though I admire Madame de Rochefide's cleverness as a woman, she is to me supremely odious."

"And that is what our fairest dreams, our celestial loves end in," said Calyste, overwhelmed by so many revelations and disenchantments.

"In a fish's tail," cried Maxime, "or, which is worse, in an apothecary's gallipot! I have never known a first love that did not end idiotically. Ah, Monsieur le Baron, whatever there may be that is heavenly in man finds its nourishment in Heaven alone! This is the excuse for us rakes. I, Monsieur, have gone deeply into the question, and, as you see, I am just married. I shall be faithful to my wife, and I would urge you to return to Madame du Guénic—but—three months hence.

"Do not regret Béatrix; she is a pattern of those vain natures, devoid of energy, but flirts out of vainglory—a Madame d'Espard without political faculty, a woman devoid of heart and brain, frivolous in wickedness. Madame de Rochefide loves no one but Madame de Rochefide; she would have involved you in an irremediable quarrel with Madame du Guénic, and then have thrown you over without a qualm; in fact, she is as inadequate for vice as for virtue."

"I do not agree with you, Maxime," said la Palférine; "she will be the most delightful mistress of a great house in all Paris."

Calyste did not leave the house without shaking hands with Charles-Edouard and Maxime de Trailles, thanking them for having cured him of his illusions.

Three days later the Duchesse de Grandlieu, who had not

seen her daughter Sabine since the morning of the great conference, called one morning and found Calyste in his bathroom. Sabine was sewing at some new finery for her baby-clothes.

"Well, how are you children getting on?" asked the kind Duchess.

"As well as possible, dear mamma," replied Sabine, looking at her mother with eyes bright with happiness. "We have acted out the fable of the Two Pigeons—that is all."

Calyste held out his hand to his wife and pressed hers tenderly.

*1838–1844.*

# THE ATHEIST'S MASS

# PREFACE

THE VOLUME which has its chief constituent in "Honorine" contains some of the author's very best work; indeed, it contains very little that is much below his best. The opening story—with its bold statement that "On trouve partout quelque chose de meilleur que l'Angleterre [which, be it remembered, M. Honoré de Balzac had never seen] tandis qu'il est excessivement difficile de retrouver loin de la France les charmes de la France"—may draw a smile from Englishmen. But just as it is only a very foolish lover who finds fault with any one else for preferring the charms of his own love, so it is only a very weak-minded and weak-kneed patriot who questions the idolatry of a patriotism that is not his own. For the rest, "Honorine" contains some of Balzac's profoundest observations, better stated than is usual, or at least invariable, with him. The best of all are certain axioms, disputed rather than disputable, as to the difference of men's and women's love. The book suffers to some extent from that artistic fault of the recitation, rather than the story proper, to which he was so prone, and perhaps a little from the other proneness—so constantly to be noted in any complete critique of him—to exaggerate and idealize good as well as ill. But it is, as his abomination Sainte-Beuve said of another matter, an *essai noble;* and it is not, as Sainte-Beuve also said of that matter which had nothing to do with Balzac, an *essai pâle.*

"Le Colonel Chabert," which would well have deserved a place in those "Scènes de la Vie Militaire," so scantily represented in the "Comédie," has other attractions. It reminds us of Balzac's sojourn in the tents of Themis, and of the knowledge that he brought therefrom; it gives an

example of his affection for the *idée fixe*, for the man with a mania; and it is also no inconsiderable example of his pathos.

But it, in like wise with "Honorine," must give way to the two tales which follow, and which, by the common consent of competent judges, practically take rank, though in very different ways, with the novelist's very best work. Of the two, "La Messe de l'Athée" is the greatest. Its extreme brevity makes it almost impossible for the author to indulge in those digressions from which he never could entirely free himself when he allowed himself much room. We do not hear more of the inward character of Desplein than is necessary to make us appreciate the touching history which is the centre of the anecdote; the thing in general could not be presented at greater advantage than it is. Nor in itself could it be much, if at all, better. As usual, it is more or less of a personal confession. Balzac, it must always be remembered, was himself pretty definitely "on the side of the angels." As a Frenchman, as a man with a strong eighteenth-century tincture in him, as a student of Rabelais, as one not too much given to regard nature and fate through rose-colored spectacles, as a product of more or less godless education (for his school-days came before the neo-catholic revival), and in many other ways, he was not exactly an orthodox person. But he had no ideas foreign to orthodoxy; and neither in his novels, nor in his letters, nor elsewhere, would it be possible to find a private expression of unbelief. And such a story as this is worth a bookseller's warehouse full of tracts, coming as it does from Honoré de Balzac.

"L'Interdiction" is sufficiently different, but it is almost equally good in its own way. It is indeed impossible to say that there is not in the manner, though perhaps there may be none in the fact, of the Marquis d'Espard's restitution and the rest of it a little touch of the madder side of Quixotism; and one sees all the speculative and planning Balzac in that notable scheme of the great work

on China, which brought in far, far more, I fear, than any work on China ever has or is likely to bring in to its devisers. But the conduct of Popinot, in his interview with the Marquise, is really admirable. The great scenes of fictitious *finesse* do not always "come of"; we do not invariably find ourselves experiencing that sense of the ability of his characters which the novelist appears to entertain, and expects us to entertain likewise. But this is admirable; it is, with Charles de Bernard's "Le Gendre," perhaps the very best thing of the kind to be found anywhere. And it is thoroughly well framed in what comes before and after; nor is it, as is too common in Balzac, spoiled by intrusion or accumulation of things irrelevant. These two stories, "L'Interdiction" and "La Messe de l'Athée," would, if they existed entirely by themselves, and if we knew nothing else of their author's, and nothing else about him, suffice to show any intelligent critic that genius of no ordinary kind had passed by there.

"Pierre Grassou" is much slighter and smaller; it is not even on a level with "Honorine" or "Le Colonel Chabert." But it is good in itself; it is very characteristic of its time, and it is specially happy as giving the volume a touch of comedy, which is grateful, and which makes it as a whole rather superior to most of Balzac's volumes—volumes apt to be "fagoted" rather than composed. The figure of the artist-*bourgeois*, neither Bohemian nor *buveur d'eau*, is excellently hit off, and the thing leaves us with all the sense of a pleasant afterpiece.

"Honorine" was rather a late book. It appeared in "La Presse" in the spring of 1843 with a motto from "Mademoiselle de Maupin," and in six headless chapters; a year later it was published in two volumes by Potter, with forty headed chapters or sections; and in 1845 it took rank in the "Scènes de la Vie Privée" and the "Comédie." It was then accompanied by the three tales which follow it here, though they do not in the "Edition Définitive." "Le Colonel Chabert" is a capital example of Balzac's mania for "pulling about"

his stories. It is as old as the spring of 1832, when it appeared in the "Artiste" with the title of "La Transaction," and in *four* parts. Before the year was out it formed part of a collection of tales called "Le Salmigondis," but was now called "Le Comte Chabert." In 1835 it became a "Scéne de la Vie Parisienne" (the "Comédie" was not yet) as "La Comtesse à deux Maris," and in *three* parts. It was shifted to the "Vie Privée" afterward, with its present title and no divisions; and Balzac, for some reason, altered the date from 1832 to 1840 in the text. "La Messe de l'Athée" appeared first in the "Chronique de Paris" for January 4, 1836; next year joined the other "Études Philosophiques"; and in 1844 the "Vie Privée" and the "Comédie." "L'Interdiction," making its bow in the same year and the same paper, was earlier separated from the "Etudes Philosophiques" to be a "Scène de la Vie Parisienne." "Pierre Grassou" was first printed in a miscellany named "Babel" in the year 1840, was republished with "Pierrette" in the same year, and joined the "Maison de Balzac" in 1844.

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THIS IS DEDICATED TO AUGUSTE BORGET BY HIS FRIEND DE BALZAC

*BIANCHON*, a physician to whom science owes a fine system of theoretical physiology, and who, while still young, made himself a celebrity in the medical school of Paris, that central luminary to which European doctors do homage, practiced surgery for a long time before he took up medicine. His earliest studies were guided by one of the greatest of French surgeons, the illustrious Desplein, who flashed across science like a meteor. By the consensus even of his enemies, he took with him to the tomb an incommunicable method. Like all men of genius, he had no heirs; he carried everything in him, and carried it away with him. The glory of a surgeon is like that of an actor: they live only so long as they are alive, and their talent leaves no trace when they are gone. Actors and surgeons, like great singers too, like the executants who by their performance increase the power of music tenfold, are all the heroes of a moment.

Desplein is a case in proof of this resemblance in the destinies of such transient genius. His name, yesterday so famous, to-day almost forgotten, will survive in his special department without crossing its limits. For must there not be some extraordinary circumstances to exalt the name of a professor from the history of Science to the general history of the human race? Had Desplein that universal command of knowledge which makes a man the living word, the great figure of his age? Desplein had a godlike eye; he saw into the sufferer and his malady by an intuition, natural or ac-

quired, which enabled him to grasp the diagnostics peculiar to the individual, to determine the very time, the hour, the minute when an operation should be performed, making due allowance for atmospheric conditions and peculiarities of individual temperament. To proceed thus, hand in hand with nature, had he then studied the constant assimilation, by living beings, of the elements contained in the atmosphere, or yielded by the earth to man who absorbs them, deriving from them a particular expression of life? Did he work it all out by the power of deduction and analogy, to which we owe the genius of Cuvier? Be this as it may, this man was in all the secrets of the human frame; he knew it in the past and in the future, emphasizing the present.

But did he epitomize all science in his own person as Hippocrates did and Galen and Aristotle? Did he guide a whole school toward new worlds? No. Though it is impossible to deny that this persistent observer of human chemistry possessed the antique science of the Mages, that is to say, knowledge of the elements in fusion, the causes of life, life antecedent to life, and what it must be in its incubation or ever it *is*, it must be confessed that, unfortunately, everything in him was purely personal. Isolated during his life by his egoism, that egoism is now suicidal of his glory. On his tomb there is no proclaiming statue to repeat to posterity the mysteries which genius seeks out at its own cost.

But perhaps Desplein's genius was answerable for his beliefs, and for that reason mortal. To him the terrestrial atmosphere was a generative envelope; he saw the earth as an egg within its shell; and not being able to determine whether the egg or the hen first was, he would not recognize either the cock or the egg. He believed neither in the antecedent animal nor the surviving spirit of man. Desplein had no doubts; he was positive. His bold and unqualified atheism was like that of many scientific men, the best men in the world, but invincible atheists—atheists such as religious people declare to be impossible. This opinion could

carcely exist otherwise in a man who was accustomed from his youth to dissect the creature above all others—before, during, and after life; to hunt through all his organs without ever finding the individual soul, which is indispensable to religious theory. When he detected a cerebral centre, a nervous centre, and a centre for aerating the blood—the first two so perfectly complementary that in the latter years of his life he came to a conviction that the sense of hearing is not absolutely necessary for hearing, nor the sense of sight for seeing, and that the solar plexus could supply their place without any possibility of doubt—Desplein, thus finding two souls in man, confirmed his atheism by this fact, though it is no evidence against God. This man died, it is said, in final impenitence, as do, unfortunately, many noble geniuses, whom God may forgive.

The life of this man, great as he was, was marred by many meannesses, to use the expression employed by his enemies, who were anxious to diminish his glory, but which it would be more proper to call apparent contradictions. Envious people and fools, having no knowledge of the determinations by which superior spirits are moved, seize at once on superficial inconsistencies, to formulate an accusation and so to pass sentence on them. If, subsequently, the proceedings thus attacked are crowned with success, showing the correlation of the preliminaries and the results, a few of the vanguard of calumnies always survive. In our own day, for instance, Napoleon was condemned by our contemporaries when he spread his eagle's wings to alight in England: only 1822 could explain 1804 and the flat boats at Boulogne.

As, in Desplein, his glory and science were invulnerable, his enemies attacked his odd moods and his temper, whereas, in fact, he was simply characterized by what the English call eccentricity. Sometimes very handsomely dressed, like Crébillon the tragical, he would suddenly affect extreme indifference as to what he wore; he was sometimes seen in a carriage, and sometimes on foot. By turns rough and

kind, harsh and covetous on the surface, but capable of offering his whole fortune to his exiled masters—who did him the honor of accepting it for a few days—no man ever gave rise to such contradictory judgments. Although to obtain a black ribbon, which physicians ought not to intrigue for, he was capable of dropping a prayer-book out of his pocket at Court, in his heart he mocked at everything; he had a deep contempt for men, after studying them from above and below, after detecting their genuine expression when performing the most solemn and the meanest acts of their lives.

The qualities of a great man are often federative. If among these colossal spirits one has more talent than wit, his wit is still superior to that of a man of whom it is simply stated that "he is witty." Genius always presupposes moral insight. This insight may be applied to a special subject; but he who can see a flower must be able to see the sun. The man who on hearing a diplomat he had saved ask, "How is the Emperor?" could say, "The courtier is alive; the man will follow!"—that man is not merely a surgeon or a physician, he is prodigiously witty also. Hence a patient and diligent student of human nature will admit Desplein's exorbitant pretensions, and believe—as he himself believed—that he might have been no less great as a minister than he was as a surgeon.

Among the riddles which Desplein's life presents to many of his contemporaries, we have chosen one of the most interesting, because the answer is to be found at the end of the narrative, and will avenge him for some foolish charges.

Of all the students in Desplein's hospital, Horace Bianchon was one of those to whom he most warmly attached himself. Before being a house surgeon at the Hotel-Dieu, Horace Bianchon had been a medical student lodging in a squalid boarding-house in the *Quartier Latin*, known as the Maison Vauquer. This poor young man had felt there the gnawing of that burning poverty which is a sort of crucible from which great talents are to emerge as pure and incor-

ruptible as diamonds, which may be subjected to any shock without being crushed. In the fierce fire of their unbridled passions they acquire the most impeccable honesty, and get into the habit of fighting the battles which await genius with the constant work by which they coerce their cheated appetites.

Horace was an upright young fellow, incapable of tergiversation on a matter of honor, going to the point without waste of words, and as ready to pledge his cloak for a friend as to give him his time and his night hours. Horace, in short, was one of those friends who are never anxious as to what they may get in return for what they give, feeling sure that they will in their turn get more than they give. Most of his friends felt for him that deeply-seated respect which is inspired by unostentatious virtue, and many of them dreaded his censure. But Horace made no pedantic display of his qualities. He was neither a Puritan nor a preacher; he could swear with a grace as he gave his advice, and was always ready for a jollification when occasion offered. A jolly companion, not more prudish than a trooper, as frank and outspoken—not as a sailor, for nowadays sailors are wily diplomats—but as an honest man who has nothing in his life to hide, he walked with his head erect, and a mind content. In short, to put the facts into a word, Horace was the Pylades of more than one Orestes —creditors being regarded as the nearest modern equivalent to the Furies of the ancients.

He carried his poverty with the cheerfulness which is perhaps one of the chief elements of courage, and, like all people who have nothing, he made very few debts. As sober as a camel and active as a stag, he was steadfast in his ideas and his conduct.

The happy phase of Bianchon's life began on the day when the famous surgeon had proof of the qualities and the defects which, these no less than those, make Doctor Horace Bianchon doubly dear to his friends. When a leading clinical practitioner takes a young man to his bosom, that young

man has, as they say, his foot in the stirrup. Desplein did not fail to take Bianchon as his assistant to wealthy houses, where some complimentary fee almost always found its way into the student's pocket, and where the mysteries of Paris life were insensibly revealed to the young provincial; he kept him at his side when a consultation was to be held, and gave him occupation; sometimes he would send him to a watering place with a rich patient; in fact, he was making a practice for him. The consequence was that in the course of time the Tyrant of surgery had a devoted ally. These two men —one at the summit of honor and of his science, enjoying an immense fortune and an immense reputation; the other a humble Omega, having neither fortune nor fame—became intimate friends.

The great Desplein told his house surgeon everything; the disciple knew whether such or such a woman had sat on a chair near the master, or on the famous couch in Desplein's surgery, on which he slept; Bianchon knew the mysteries of that temperament, a compound of the lion and the bull, which at last expanded and enlarged beyond measure the great man's torso, and caused his death by degeneration of the heart. He studied the eccentricities of that busy life, the schemes of that sordid avarice, the hopes of the politician who lurked behind the man of science; he was able to foresee the mortifications that awaited the only sentiment that lay hid in a heart that was steeled, but not of steel.

One day Bianchon spoke to Desplein of a poor water-carrier of the Saint-Jacques district, who had a horrible disease caused by fatigue and want; this wretched Auvergnat had had nothing but potatoes to eat during the dreadful winter of 1821. Desplein left all his visits, and, at the risk of killing his horse, he rushed off, followed by Bianchon, to the poor man's dwelling, and saw, himself, to his being removed to a sick house, founded by the famous Dubois in the Faubourg Saint-Denis. Then he went to attend the man, and when he had cured him he gave him the neces-

sary sum to buy a horse and a water-barrel. This Auvergnat distinguished himself by an amusing action. One of his friends fell ill, and he took him at once to Desplein, saying to his benefactor, "I could not have borne to let him go to any one else!"

Rough customer as he was, Desplein grasped the water-carrier's hand, and said, "Bring them all to me."

He got the native of Cantal into the Hotel-Dieu, where he took the greatest care of him. Bianchon had already observed in his chief a predilection for Auvergnats, and especially for water-carriers; but as Desplein took a sort of pride in his cures at the Hotel-Dieu, the pupil saw nothing very strange in that.

One day, as he crossed the Place Saint-Sulpice, Bianchon caught sight of his master going into the church at about nine in the morning. Desplein, who at that time never went a step without his cab, was on foot, and slipped in by the door in the Rue du Petit-Lion, as if he were stealing into some house of ill-fame. The house-surgeon, naturally possessed by curiosity, knowing his master's opinions, and being himself a rabid follower of Cabanis (*Cabaniste enragé*, with the *y*, which in Rabelais seems to convey an intensity of devilry)—Bianchon stole into the church, and was not a little astonished to see the great Desplein, the atheist, who had no mercy on the angels—who give no work to the lancet, and cannot suffer from fistula or gastritis—in short, this audacious scoffer kneeling humbly, and where? In the Lady Chapel, where he remained through the mass, giving alms for the expenses of the service, alms for the poor, and looking as serious as though he were superintending an operation.

"He has certainly not come here to clear up the question of the Virgin's delivery," said Bianchon to himself, astonished beyond measure. "If I had caught him holding one of the ropes of the canopy on Corpus Christi day, it would be a thing to laugh at; but at this hour, alone, with no one to see—it is surely a thing to marvel at!"

Bianchon did not wish to seem as though he were spying the head surgeon of the Hotel-Dieu; he went away. As it happened, Desplein asked him to dine with him that day, not at his own house, but at a restaurant. At dessert Bianchon skilfully contrived to talk of the mass, speaking of it as mummery and a farce.

"A farce," said Desplein, "which has cost Christendom more blood than all Napoleon's battles and all Broussais' leeches. The mass is a papal invention, not older than the sixth century, and based on the *Hoc est corpus*. What floods of blood were shed to establish the Fête-Dieu, the Festival of Corpus Christi—the institution by which Rome established her triumph in the question of the Real Presence, a schism which rent the Church during three centuries! The wars of the Count of Toulouse against the Albigenses were the tail end of that dispute. The Vaudois and the Albigenses refused to recognize this innovation."

In short, Desplein was delighted to disport himself in his most atheistical vein; a flow of Voltairian satire, or, to be accurate, a vile imitation of the *Citateur*.

"Hallo! where is my worshipper of this morning?" said Bianchon to himself.

He said nothing; he began to doubt whether he had really seen his chief at Saint-Sulpice. Desplein would not have troubled himself to tell Bianchon a lie, they knew each other too well; they had already exchanged thoughts on quite equally serious subjects, and discussed systems *de natura rerum*, probing or dissecting them with the knife and scalpel of incredulity.

Three months went by. Bianchon did not attempt to follow the matter up, though it remained stamped on his memory. One day that year, one of the physicians of the Hotel-Dieu took Desplein by the arm, as if to question him, in Bianchon's presence.

"What were you doing at Saint-Sulpice, my dear master?" said he.

"I went to see a priest who has a diseased knee-bone,

and to whom the Duchesse d'Angoulême did me the honor to recommend me," said Desplein.

The questioner took this defeat for an answer; not so Bianchon.

"Oh, he goes to see damaged knees in church!—He went to mass," said the young man to himself.

Bianchon resolved to watch Desplein. He remembered the day and hour when he had detected him going into Saint-Sulpice, and resolved to be there again next year on the same day and at the same hour, to see if he should find him there again. In that case the periodicity of his devotions would justify a scientific investigation; for in such a man there ought to be no direct antagonism of thought and action.

Next year, on the said day and hour, Bianchon, who had already ceased to be Desplein's house surgeon, saw the great man's cab standing at the corner of the Rue de Tournon and the Rue du Petit-Lion, whence his friend jesuitically crept along by the wall of Saint-Sulpice, and once more attended mass in front of the Virgin's altar. It was Desplein, sure enough! The master-surgeon, the atheist at heart, the worshipper by chance. The mystery was greater than ever; the regularity of the phenomenon complicated it. When Desplein had left, Bianchon went to the sacristan, who took charge of the chapel, and asked him whether the gentleman were a constant worshipper.

"For twenty years that I have been here," replied the man, "M. Desplein has come four times a year to attend this mass. He founded it."

"A mass founded by him!" said Bianchon, as he went away. "This is as great a mystery as the Immaculate Conception—an article which alone is enough to make a physician an unbeliever."

Some time elapsed before Doctor Bianchon, though so much his friend, found an opportunity of speaking to Desplein of this incident of his life. Though they met in consultation, or in society, it was difficult to find an hour of confidential solitude when, sitting with their feet on the fire-

dogs and their head resting on the back of an armchair, two men tell each other their secrets. At last, seven years later, after the Revolution of 1830, when the mob invaded the Archbishop's residence, when Republican agitators spurred them on to destroy the gilt crosses which flashed like streaks of lightning in the immensity of the ocean of houses; when Incredulity flaunted itself in the streets, side by side with Rebellion, Bianchon once more detected Desplein going into Saint-Sulpice. The doctor followed him, and knelt down by him without the slightest notice or demonstration of surprise from his friend. They both attended this mass of his founding.

"Will you tell me, my dear fellow," said Bianchon, as they left the church, "the reason for your fit of monkishness? I have caught you three times going to mass— You! You must account to me for this mystery, explain such a flagrant disagreement between your opinions and your conduct. You do not believe in God, and yet you attend mass? My dear master, you are bound to give me an answer."

"I am like a great many devout people, men who on the surface are deeply religious, but quite as much atheists as you or I can be."

And he poured out a torrent of epigrams on certain political personages, of whom the best known gives us, in this century, a new edition of Molière's "Tartufe."

"All that has nothing to do with my question," retorted Bianchon. "I want to know the reason for what you have just been doing, and why you founded this mass?"

"Faith! my dear boy," said Desplein, "I am on the verge of the tomb; I may safely tell you about the beginning of my life."

At this moment Bianchon and the great man were in the Rue des Quatre-Vents, one of the worst streets in Paris. Desplein pointed to the sixth floor of one of the houses looking like obelisks, of which the narrow door opens into a passage with a winding staircase at the end, with windows appropriately termed "borrowed lights"—or, in French, *jours de*

*souffrance.* It was a greenish structure; the ground floor occupied by a furniture dealer, while each floor seemed to shelter a different and independent form of misery. Throwing up his arms with a vehement gesture, Desplein exclaimed: "I lived up there for two years."

"I know; Arthez lived there; I went up there almost every day during my first youth; we used to call it then the pickle-jar of great men! What then?"

"The mass I have just attended is connected with some events which took place at the time when I lived in the garret where you say Arthez lived; the one with the window where the clothes line is hanging with linen over a pot of flowers. My early life was so hard, my dear Bianchon, that I may dispute the palm of Paris suffering with any man living. I have endured everything: hunger and thirst, want of money, want of clothes, of shoes, of linen, every cruelty that penury can inflict. I have blown on my frozen fingers in that *pickle-jar of great men*, which I should like to see again, now, with you. I worked through a whole winter, seeing my head steam, and perceiving the atmosphere of my own moisture as we see that of horses on a frosty day. I do not know where a man finds the fulcrum that enables him to hold out against such a life.

"I was alone, with no one to help me, no money to buy books or to pay the expenses of my medical training; I had not a friend; my irascible, touchy, restless temper was against me. No one understood that this irritability was the distress and toil of a man who, at the bottom of the social scale, is struggling to reach the surface. Still, I had, as I may say to you, before whom I need wear no draperies, I had that ground-bed of good feeling and keen sensitiveness which must always be the birthright of any man who is strong enough to climb to any height whatever, after having long trampled in the bogs of poverty. I could obtain nothing from my family, nor from my home, beyond my inadequate allowance. In short, at that time, I breakfasted off a roll which the baker in the Rue du Petit-Lion sold me cheap

because it was left from yesterday or the day before, and I crumbled it into milk; thus my morning meal cost me but two sous. I dined only every other day in a boarding-house where the meal cost me sixteen sous. You know as well as I what care I must have taken of my clothes and shoes. I hardly know whether in later life we feel grief so deep when a colleague plays us false, as we have known, you and I, on detecting the mocking smile of a gaping seam in a shoe, or hearing the armhole of a coat split. I drank nothing but water; I regarded a café with distant respect. Zoppi's seemed to me a promised land where none but the Lucullus of the *pays Latin* had a right of entry. 'Shall I ever take a cup of coffee there with milk in it?' said I to myself, 'or play a game of dominos?'

"I threw into my work the fury I felt at my misery. I tried to master positive knowledge so as to acquire the greatest personal value, and merit the position I should hold as soon as I could escape from nothingness. I consumed more oil than bread; the light I burned during these endless nights cost me more than food. It was a long duel, obstinate, with no sort of consolation. I found no sympathy anywhere. To have friends, must we not form connections with young men, have a few sous so as to be able to go tippling with them and meet them where students congregate? And I had nothing! And no one in Paris can understand that nothing means *nothing*. When I even thought of revealing my beggary, I had that nervous contraction of the throat which makes a sick man believe that a ball rises up from the œsophagus into the larynx.

"In later life I have met people born to wealth who, never having wanted for anything, had never even heard this problem in the rule of three: A young man is to crime as a five-franc piece is to *x*.—These gilded idiots say to me, 'Why did you get into debt? Why did you involve yourself in such onerous obligations?' They remind me of the princess who, on hearing that the people lacked bread, said, 'Why do not they buy cakes?' I should like to see one of these rich

men, who complain that I charge too much for an operation —yes, I should like to see him alone in Paris without a sou, without a friend, without credit, and forced to work with his five fingers to live at all! What would he do? Where would he go to satisfy his hunger?

"Bianchon, if you have sometimes seen me hard and bitter, it was because I was adding my early sufferings on to the insensibility, the selfishness of which I have seen thousands of instances in the highest circles; or, perhaps, I was thinking of the obstacles which hatred, envy, jealousy, and calumny raised up between me and success. In Paris, when certain people see you ready to set your foot in the stirrup, some pull your coat-tails, others loosen the buckle of the strap that you may fall and crack your skull; one wrenches off your horse's shoes, another steals your whip, and the least treacherous of them all is the man whom you see coming to fire his pistol at you pointblank.

"You yourself, my dear boy, are clever enough to make acquaintance before long with the odious and incessant warfare waged by mediocrity against the superior man. If you should drop five-and-twenty louis one day, you will be accused of gambling on the next, and your best friends will report that you have lost twenty-five thousand. If you have a headache, you will be considered mad. If you are a little hasty, no one can live with you. If, to make a stand against this armament of pygmies, you collect your best powers, your best friends will cry out that you want to have everything, that you aim at domineering, at tyranny. In short, your good points will become your faults, your faults will be vices, and your virtues crimes.

"If you save a man, you will be said to have killed him; if he reappears on the scene, it will be positive that you have secured the present at the cost of the future. If he is not dead, he will die. Stumble, and you fall! Invent anything of any kind and claim your rights, you will be crotchety, cunning, ill-disposed to rising younger men.

"So, you see, my dear fellow, if I do not believe in God,

I believe still less in man. But do not you know in me another Desplein, altogether different from the Desplein whom every one abuses?—However, we will not stir that mud-heap.

"Well, I was living in that house, I was working hard to pass my first examination, and I had no money at all. You know. I had come to one of those moments of extremity when a man says, 'I will enlist.' I had one hope. I expected from my home a box full of linen, a present from one of those old aunts who, knowing nothing of Paris, think of your shirts, while they imagine that their nephew with thirty francs a month is eating ortolans. The box arrived while I was at the schools; it had cost forty francs for carriage. The porter, a German shoemaker living in a loft, had paid the money and kept the box. I walked up and down the Rue des Fossés-Saint-Germain-des-Près and the Rue de l'Ecole de Médecine without hitting on any scheme which would release my trunk without the payment of the forty francs, which of course I could pay as soon as I should have sold the linen. My stupidity proved to me that surgery was my only vocation. My good fellow, refined souls, whose powers move in a lofty atmosphere, have none of that spirit of intrigue that is fertile in resource and device; their good genius is chance; they do not invent, things come to them.

"At night I went home, at the very moment when my fellow lodger also came in—a water-carrier named Bourgeat, a native of Saint-Flour. We knew each other as two lodgers do who have rooms off the same landing, and who hear each other sleeping, coughing, dressing, and so at last become used to one another. My neighbor informed me that the landlord, to whom I owed three-quarters' rent, had turned me out; I must clear out next morning. He himself was also turned out on account of his occupation. I spent the most miserable night of my life. Where was I to get a messenger who could carry my few chattels and my books? How could I pay him and the porter? Where was I to go? I repeated these unanswerable questions again and again, in

tears, as madmen repeat their tunes. I fell asleep; poverty has for its friend heavenly slumbers full of beautiful dreams.

"Next morning, just as I was swallowing my little bowl of bread soaked in milk, Bourgeat came in and said to me in his vile Auvergne accent: '*Mouchieur l'Etudiant*, I am a poor man, a foundling from the hospital at Saint-Flour, without either father or mother, and not rich enough to marry. You are not fertile in relations either, nor well supplied with the ready? Listen, I have a handcart downstairs which I have hired for two sous an hour; it will hold all our goods; if you like, we will try to find lodgings together, since we are both turned out of this. It is not the earthly paradise, when all is said and done.'

" 'I know that, my good Bourgeat,' said I. 'But I am in a great fix. I have a trunk downstairs with a hundred francs' worth of linen in it, out of which I could pay the landlord and all I owe to the porter, and I have not a hundred sous.'

" 'Pooh! I have a few dibs,' replied Bourgeat joyfully, and he pulled out a greasy old leather purse. 'Keep your linen.'

"Bourgeat paid up my arrears and his own, and settled with the porter. Then he put our furniture and my box of linen in his cart, and pulled it along the street, stopping in front of every house where there was a notice board. I went up to see whether the rooms to let would suit us. At midday we were still wandering about the neighborhood without having found anything. The price was the great difficulty. Bourgeat proposed that we should eat at a wine shop, leaving the cart at the door. Toward evening I discovered, in the Cour de Rohan, Passage du Commerce, at the very top of a house, next the roof, two rooms with a staircase between them. Each of us was to pay sixty francs a year. So there we were housed, my humble friend and I. We dined together. Bourgeat, who earned about fifty sous a day, had saved a hundred crowns or so; he would soon be able to gratify his ambition by buying a barrel and a horse.

On learning my situation—for he extracted my secrets with a quiet craftiness and good nature of which the remembrance touches my heart to this day, he gave up for a time the ambition of his whole life; for twenty-two years he had been carrying water in the street, and he now devoted his hundred crowns to my future prospects."

Desplein at these words clutched Bianchon's arm tightly. "He gave me the money for my examination fees! That man, my friend, understood that I had a mission, that the needs of my intellect were greater than his. He looked after me, he called me his boy, he loaned me money to buy books, he would come in softly sometimes to watch me at work, and took a mother's care in seeing that I had wholesome and abundant food, instead of the bad and insufficient nourishment I had been condemned to. Bourgeat, a man of about forty, had a homely, medieval type of face, a prominent forehead, a head that a painter might have chosen as a model for that of Lycurgus. The poor man's heart was big with affections seeking an object; he had never been loved but by a poodle that had died some time since, of which he would talk to me, asking whether I thought the Church would allow masses to be said for the repose of its soul. His dog, said he, had been a good Christian, who for twelve years had accompanied him to church, never barking, listening to the organ without opening his mouth, and crouching beside him in a way that made it seem as though he were praying too.

"This man centred all his affections in me; he looked upon me as a forlorn and suffering creature, and he became, to me, the most thoughtful mother, the most considerate benefactor, the ideal of the virtue which rejoices in its own work. When I met him in the street, he would throw me a glance of intelligence full of unutterable dignity; he would affect to walk as though he carried no weight, and seemed happy in seeing me in good health and well dressed. It was, in fact, the devoted affection of the lower classes, the love of a girl of the people transferred to a loftier level.

Bourgeat did all my errands, woke me at night at any fixed hour, trimmed my lamp, cleaned our landing; as good as a servant as he was as a father, and as clean as an English girl. He did all the housework. Like Philopœmen, he sawed our wood, and gave to all he did the grace of simplicity while preserving his dignity, for he seemed to understand that the end ennobles every act.

"When I left this good fellow, to be house surgeon at the Hotel-Dieu, I felt an indescribable, dull pain, knowing that he could no longer live with me; but he comforted himself with the prospect of saving up money enough for me to take my degree, and he made me promise to go to see him whenever I had a day out: Bourgeat was proud of me. He loved me for my own sake, and for his own. If you look up my thesis, you will see that I dedicated it to him.

"During the last year of my residence as house surgeon I earned enough to repay all I owed to this worthy Auvergnat by buying him a barrel and a horse. He was furious with rage at learning that I had been depriving myself of spending my money, and yet he was delighted to see his wishes fulfilled; he laughed and scolded, he looked at his barrel, at his horse, and wiped away a tear, as he said, 'It is too bad. What a splendid barrel! You really ought not. Why, that horse is as strong as an Auvergnat!'

"I never saw a more touching scene. Bourgeat insisted on buying for me the case of instruments mounted in silver which you have seen in my room, and which is to me the most precious thing there. Though enchanted with my first success, never did the least sign, the least word, escape him which might imply, 'This man owes all to me!' And yet, but for him, I should have died of want; he had eaten bread rubbed with garlic that I might have coffee to enable me to sit up at night.

"He fell ill. As you may suppose, I passed my nights by his bedside, and the first time I pulled him through; but two years after he had a relapse; in spite of the utmost care, in spite of the greatest exertions of science, he succumbed.

No king was ever nursed as he was. Yes, Bianchon, to snatch that man from death I tried unheard-of things. I wanted him to live long enough to show him his work accomplished, to realize all his hopes, to give expression to the only need for gratitude that ever filled my heart, to quench a fire that burns in me to this day.

"Bourgeat, my second father, died in my arms," Desplein went on, after a pause, visibly moved. "He left me everything he possessed by a will he had had made by a public scrivener, dating from the year when we had gone to live in the Cour de Rohan.

"This man's faith was perfect; he loved the Holy Virgin as he might have loved his wife. He was an ardent Catholic, but never said a word to me about my want of religion. When he was dying he entreated me to spare no expense that he might have every possible benefit of clergy. I had a mass said for him every day. Often, in the night, he would tell me of his fears as to his future fate; he feared his life had not been saintly enough. Poor man! he was at work from morning till night. For whom, then, is Paradise —if there be a Paradise? He received the last sacrament like the saint that he was, and his death was worthy of his life.

"I alone followed him to the grave. When I had laid my only benefactor to rest, I looked about to see how I could pay my debt to him; I found he had neither family nor friends, neither wife nor child. But he believed. He had a religious conviction; had I any right to dispute it? He had spoken to me timidly of masses said for the repose of the dead; he would not impress it on me as a duty, thinking that it would be a form of repayment for his services. As soon as I had money enough I paid to Saint-Sulpice the requisite sum for four masses every year. As the only thing I can do for Bourgeat is thus to satisfy his pious wishes, on the days when that mass is said, at the beginning of each season of the year, I go for his sake and say the required prayers; and I say with the good faith of a sceptic—'Great

God, if there is a sphere which Thou hast appointed after death for those who have been perfect, remember good Bourgeat; and if he should have anything to suffer, let me suffer it for him, that he may enter all the sooner into what is called Paradise.'

"That, my dear fellow, is as much as a man who holds my opinions can allow himself. But God must be a good fellow; He cannot owe me any grudge. I swear to you, I would give my whole fortune if faith such as Bourgeat's could enter my brain."

Bianchon, who was with Desplein all through his last illness, dares not affirm to this day that the great surgeon died an atheist. Will not those who believe like to fancy that the humble Auvergnat came to open the gate of heaven to his friend, as he did that of the earthly temple on whose pediment we read the words—"A grateful country to its great men"?

PARIS, *January, 1836.*

# HONORINE

TO MONSIEUR ACHILLE DEVERIA

*An affectionate remembrance from the Author*

*IF THE FRENCH* have as great an aversion for travelling as the English have a propensity for it, both English and French have perhaps sufficient reasons. Something better than England is everywhere to be found; whereas it is excessively difficult to find the charms of France outside France. Other countries can show admirable scenery, and they frequently offer greater comfort than that of France, which makes but slow progress in that particular. They sometimes display a bewildering magnificence, grandeur, and luxury; they lack neither grace nor noble manners; but the life of the brain, the talent for conversation, the "Attic salt" so familiar at Paris, the prompt apprehension of what one is thinking, but does not say, the spirit of the unspoken, which is half the French language, is nowhere else to be met with. Hence a Frenchman, whose raillery, as it is, finds so little comprehension, would wither in a foreign land like an uprooted tree. Emigration is counter to the instincts of the French nation. Many Frenchmen, of the kind here in question, have owned to pleasure at seeing the custom-house officers of their native land, which may seem the most daring hyperbole of patriotism.

This little preamble is intended to recall to such Frenchmen as have travelled the extreme pleasure they have felt on occasionally finding their native land, like an oasis, in the drawing-room of some diplomat: a pleasure hard to be understood by those who have never left the asphalt of the

Boulevard des Italiens, and to whom the Quays of the left bank of the Seine are not really Paris. To find Paris again! Do you know what that means, O Parisians? It is to find—not indeed the cookery of the Rocher de Cancale as Borel elaborates it for those who can appreciate it, for that exists only in the Rue Montorgueil—but a meal which reminds you of it! It is to find the wines of France, which out of France are to be regarded as myths, and as rare as the woman of whom I write! It is to find—not the most fashionable pleasantry, for it loses its aroma between Paris and the frontier—but the witty, understanding, the critical atmosphere in which the French live, from the poet down to the artisan, from the duchess to the boy in the street.

In 1836, when the Sardinian Court was residing at Genoa, two Parisians, more or less famous, could fancy themselves still in Paris when they found themselves in a palazzo, taken by the French Consul-General, on the hill forming the last fold of the Apennines between the gate of San Tomaso and the well-known lighthouse, which is to be seen in all the keepsake views of Genoa. This palazzo is one of the magnificent villas on which Genoese nobles were wont to spend millions at the time when the aristocratic republic was a power.

If the early night is beautiful anywhere, it surely is at Genoa, after it has rained as it can rain there, in torrents, all the morning; when the clearness of the sea vies with that of the sky; when silence reigns on the quay and in the groves of the villa, and over the marble heads with yawning jaws, from which water mysteriously flows; when the stars are beaming; when the waves of the Mediterranean lap one after another like the avowal of a woman, from whom you drag it word by word. It must be confessed that the moment when the perfumed air brings fragrance to the lungs and to our day-dreams; when voluptuousness, made visible and ambient as the air, holds you in your easy-chair; when, a spoon in your hand, you sip an ice or a sorbet, the town at your feet and fair women opposite—such Boccaccio hours

can be known only in Italy and on the shores of the Mediterranean.

Imagine to yourself, round the table, the Marquis di Negro, a knight hospitaller to all men of talent on their travels, and the Marquis Damaso Pareto, two Frenchmen disguised as Genoese, a Consul-General with a wife as beautiful as a Madonna, and two silent children—silent because sleep has fallen on them—the French Ambassador and his wife, a secretary to the Embassy who believes himself to be crushed and mischievous; finally, two Parisians, who have come to take leave of the Consul's wife at a splendid dinner, and you will have the picture presented by the terrace of the villa about the middle of May—a picture in which the predominant figure was that of a celebrated woman, on whom all eyes centred now and again, the heroine of this improvised festival.

One of the two Frenchmen was the famous landscape painter, Léon de Lora; the other a well-known critic, Claude Vignon. They had both come with this lady, one of the glories of the fair sex, Mademoiselle des Touches, known in the literary world by the name of Camille Maupin.

Mademoiselle des Touches had been to Florence on business. With the charming kindness of which she is prodigal, she had brought with her Léon de Lora to show him Italy, and had gone on as far as Rome that he might see the Campagna. She had come by the Simplon, and was returning by the Cornice road to Marseilles. She had stopped at Genoa, again on the landscape painter's account. The Consul-General had, of course, wished to do the honors of Genoa, before the arrival of the Court, to a woman whose wealth, name, and position recommend her no less than her talents. Camille Maupin, who knew her Genoa down to its smallest chapels, had left her landscape painter to the care of the diplomat and the two Genoese marquises, and was miserly of her minutes. Though the ambassador was a distinguished man of letters, the celebrated lady had refused to yield to his advances, dreading what the English call an

exhibition; but she had drawn in the claws of her refusals when it was proposed that they should spend a farewell day at the Consul's villa. Léon de Lora had told Camille that her presence at the villa was the only return he could make to the Ambassador and his wife, the two Genoese noblemen, the Consul and his wife. So Mademoiselle des Touches had sacrificed one of those days of perfect freedom, which are not always to be had in Paris by those on whom the world has its eye.

Now, the meeting being accounted for, it is easy to understand that etiquette had been banished, as well as a great many women even of the highest rank, who were curious to know whether Camille Maupin's manly talent impaired her grace as a pretty woman, and to see, in a word, whether the trousers showed below her petticoats. After dinner till nine o'clock, when a collation was served, though the conversation had been gay and grave by turns, and constantly enlivened by Léon de Lora's sallies—for he is considered the most roguish wit of Paris to-day—and by the good taste which will surprise no one after the list of guests, literature had scarcely been mentioned. However, the butterfly flittings of this French tilting match were certain to come to it, were it only to flutter over this essentially French subject. But before coming to the turn in the conversation which led the Consul-General to speak, it will not be out of place to give some account of him and his family.

This diplomat, a man of four-and-thirty, who had been married about six years, was the living portrait of Lord Byron. The familiarity of that face makes a description of the Consul's unnecessary. It may, however be noted that there was no affectation in his dreamy expression. Lord Byron was a poet, and the Consul was poetical; women know and recognize the difference, which explains without justifying some of their attachments. His handsome face, thrown into relief by a delightful nature, had captivated a Genoese heiress. A Genoese heiress! the expression might raise a smile at Genoa, where, in conse-

quence of the inability of daughters to inherit, a woman is rarely rich; but Onorina Pedrotti, the only child of a banker without heirs male, was an exception. Notwithstanding all the flattering advances prompted by a spontaneous passion, the Consul-General had not seemed to wish to marry. Nevertheless, after living in the town for two years, and after certain steps taken by the Ambassador during his visits to the Genoese Court, the marriage was decided on. The young man withdrew his former refusal, less on account of the touching affection of Onorina Pedrotti than by reason of an unknown incident, one of those crises of private life which are so instantly buried under the daily tide of interests that, at a subsequent date, the most natural actions seem inexplicable.

This involution of causes sometimes affects the most serious events of history. This, at any rate, was the opinion of the town of Genoa, where, to some women, the extreme reserve, the melancholy of the French Consul could be explained only by the word passion. It may be remarked, in passing, that women never complain of being the victims of a preference; they are very ready to immolate themselves for the common weal. Onorina Pedrotti, who might have hated the Consul if she had been altogether scorned, loved her *sposo* no less, and perhaps more, when she knew that he had loved. Women allow precedence in love affairs. All is well if other women are in question.

A man is not a diplomat with impunity: the *sposo* was as secret as the grave—so secret that the merchants of Genoa chose to regard the young Consul's attitude as premeditated, and the heiress might perhaps have slipped through his fingers if he had not played his part of a lovesick *malade imaginaire*. If it was real, the women thought it too degrading to be believed.

Pedrotti's daughter gave him her love as a consolation; she lulled these unknown griefs in a cradle of tenderness and Italian caresses.

Il Signor Pedrotti had indeed no reason to complain of the choice to which he was driven by his beloved child. Powerful protectors in Paris watched over the young diplomat's fortunes. In accordance with a promise made by the Ambassador to the Consul-General's father-in-law, the young man was created Baron and Commander of the Legion of Honor. Signor Pedrotti himself was made a Count by the King of Sardinia. Onorina's dower was a million of francs. As to the fortune of the Casa Pedrotti, estimated at two millions, made in the corn trade, the young couple came into it within six months of their marriage, for the first and last Count Pedrotti died in January, 1831.

Onorina Pedrotti is one of those beautiful Genoese women who, when they are beautiful, are the most magnificent creatures in Italy. Michelangelo took his models in Genoa for the tomb of Giuliano. Hence the fulness and singular placing of the breast in the figures of Day and Night, which so many critics have thought exaggerated, but which is peculiar to the women of Liguria. A Genoese beauty is no longer to be found excepting under the *mezzaro*, as at Venice it is met with only under the *fazzioli*. This phenomenon is observed among all fallen nations. The noble type survives only among the populace, as after the burning of a town coins are found hidden in the ashes. And Onorina, an exception as regards her fortune, is no less an exceptional patrician beauty. Recall to mind the figure of Night which Michelangelo has placed at the feet of the *Pensieroso*, dress her in modern garb, twist that long hair round the magnificent head, a little dark in complexion, set a spark of fire in those dreamy eyes, throw a scarf about the massive bosom, see the long dress, white, embroidered with flowers, imagine the statue sitting upright, with her arms folded like those of Mademoiselle Georges, and you will see before you the Consul's wife, with a boy of six, as handsome as a mother's desire, and a little girl of four on her knees, as beautiful

as the type of childhood so laboriously sought out by the sculptor David to grace a tomb.

This beautiful family was the object of Camille's secret study. It struck Mademoiselle des Touches that the Consul looked rather too absent-minded for a perfectly happy man.

Although, throughout the day, the husband and wife had offered her the pleasing spectacle of complete happiness, Camille wondered why one of the most superior men she had ever met, and whom she had seen too in Paris drawing-rooms, remained as Consul-General at Genoa when he possessed a fortune of a hundred odd thousand francs a year. But, at the same time, she had discerned, by many of the little nothings which women perceive with the intelligence of the Arab sage in "Zadig," that the husband was faithfully devoted. These two handsome creatures would no doubt love each other without a misunderstanding till the end of their days. So Camille said to herself alternately, "What is wrong?—Nothing is wrong," following the misleading symptoms of the Consul's demeanor; and he, it may be said, had the absolute calmness of Englishmen, of savages, of Orientals, and of consummate diplomatists.

In discussing literature, they spoke of the perennial stock-in-trade of the republic of letters—woman's sin. And they presently found themselves confronted by two opinions: When a woman sins, is the man or the woman to blame? The three women present—the Ambassadress, the Consul's wife, and Mademoiselle des Touches, women, of course, of blameless reputations—were without pity for the woman. The men tried to convince these three fair flowers of their sex that some virtues might remain in a woman after she had fallen.

"How long are we going to play at hide-and-seek in this way?" said Léon de Lora.

"*Cara vita*, go and put your children to bed, and send me by Gina the little black pocketbook that lies on my Boule cabinet," said the Consul to his wife.

She rose without a reply, which shows that she loved her husband very truly, for she already knew French enough to understand that her husband was getting rid of her.

"I will tell you a story in which I played a part, and after that we can discuss it, for it seems to me childish to practice with the scalpel on an imaginary body. Begin by dissecting a corpse."

Every one prepared to listen, with all the greater readiness because they had all talked enough, and this is the moment to be chosen for telling a story. This, then, is the Consul-General's tale:

"When I was two-and-twenty, and had taken my degree in law, my old uncle, the Abbé Loraux, then seventy-two years old, felt it necessary to provide me with a protector, and to start me in some career. This excellent man, if not indeed a saint, regarded each year of his life as a fresh gift from God. I need not tell you that the father confessor of a Royal Highness had no difficulty in finding a place for a young man brought up by himself, his sister's only child. So one day, toward the end of the year 1824, this venerable old man, who for five years had been Curé of the White Friars at Paris, came up to the room I had in his house, and said:

" 'Get yourself dressed, my dear boy, I am going to introduce you to some one who is willing to engage you as secretary. If I am not mistaken, he may fill my place in the event of God's taking me to Himself. I shall have finished mass by nine o'clock; you have three-quarters of an hour before you. Be ready.'

" 'What, uncle! must I say good-by to this room, where for four years I have been so happy?'

" 'I have no fortune to leave you,' said he.

" 'Have you not the reputation of your name to leave me, the memory of your good works—?'

" 'We need say nothing of that inheritance,' he replied, smiling. 'You do not yet know enough of the world to be aware that a legacy of that kind is hardly likely to be paid,

whereas by taking you this morning to M. le Comte—' Allow me," said the Consul, interrupting himself, "to speak of my protector by his Christian name only, and to call him Comte Octave.—'By taking you this morning to M. le Comte Octave, I hope to secure you his patronage, which, if you are so fortunate as to please that virtuous statesman—as I make no doubt you can—will be worth, at least, as much as the fortune I might have accumulated for you, if my brother-in-law's ruin and my sister's death had not fallen on me like a thunderbolt from a clear sky.'

" 'Are you the Count's director?'

" 'If I were, could I place you with him? What priest could be capable of taking advantage of the secrets which he learns at the tribunal of repentance? No; you owe this position to his Highness, the Keeper of the Seals. My dear Maurice, you will be as much at home there as in your father's house. The Count will give you a salary of two thousand four hundred francs, rooms in his house, and an allowance of twelve hundred francs in lieu of feeding you. He will not admit you to his table, nor give you a separate table, for fear of leaving you to the care of servants. I did not accept the offer when it was made to me till I was perfectly certain that Comte Octave's secretary was never to be a mere upper servant. You will have an immense amount of work, for the Count is a great worker; but when you leave him, you will be qualified to fill the highest posts. I need not warn you to be discreet; that is the first virtue of any man who hopes to hold public appointments.'

"You may conceive of my curiosity. Comte Octave, at that time, held one of the highest legal appointments; he was in the confidence of Madame the Dauphiness, who had just got him made a State Minister; he led such a life as the Comte de Sérizy, whom you all know, I think; but even more quietly, for his house was in the Marais, Rue Payenne, and he hardly ever entertained. His private life escaped public comment by its hermit-like simplicity and by constant hard work.

"Let me describe my position to you in a few words. Having found in the solemn headmaster of the College Saint-Louis a tutor to whom my uncle delegated his authority, at the age of eighteen I had gone through all the classes; I left school as innocent as a seminarist, full of faith, on quitting Saint-Sulpice. My mother, on her death-bed, had made my uncle promise that I should not become a priest, but I was as pious as though I had to take orders. On leaving college, the Abbé Loraux took me into his house and made me study law. During the four years of study requisite for passing all the examinations, I worked hard, but chiefly at things outside the arid fields of jurisprudence. Weaned from literature as I had been at college, where I lived in the headmaster's house, I had a thirst to quench. As soon as I had read a few modern masterpieces, the works of all the preceding ages were greedily swallowed. I became crazy about the theatre, and for a long time I went every night to the play, though my uncle gave me only a hundred francs a month. This parsimony, to which the good old man was compelled by his regard for the poor, had the effect of keeping a young man's desires within reasonable limits.

"When I went to live with Comte Octave I was not indeed an innocent, but I thought of my rare escapades as crimes. My uncle was so truly angelic, and I was so much afraid of grieving him, that in all those four years I had never spent a night out. The good man would wait till I came in to go to bed. This maternal care had more power to keep me within bounds than the sermons and reproaches with which the life of a young man is diversified in a puritanical home. I was a stranger to the various circles which make up the world of Paris society; I only knew some women of the better sort, and none of the inferior class but those I saw as I walked about, or in the boxes at the play, and then only from the depths of the pit where I sat. If, at that period, any one had said to me, 'You will see Canalis, or Camille Maupin,' I should have felt hot coals in my head and in

my bowels. Famous people were to me as gods, who neither spoke, nor walked, nor ate like other mortals.

"How many tales of the Thousand and One Nights are comprehended in the ripening of a youth! How many wonderful lamps must we have rubbed before we understand that the True Wonderful Lamp is either luck, or work, or genius! In some men this dream of the aroused spirit is but brief; mine has lasted until now! In those days I always went to sleep as Grandduke of Tuscany—as a millionnaire—as beloved by a princess—or famous! So to enter the service of Comte Octave, and have a hundred louis a year, was entering on independent life. I had glimpses of some chance of getting into society, and seeking for what my heart desired most, a protectress, who would rescue me from the paths of danger, which a young man of two-and-twenty can hardly help treading, however prudent and well brought up he may be. I began to be afraid of myself.

"The persistent study of other people's rights into which I had plunged was not always enough to repress painful imaginings. Yes, sometimes in fancy I threw myself into theatrical life; I thought I could be a great actor; I dreamed of endless triumphs and loves, knowing nothing of the disillusion hidden behind the curtain, as everywhere else—for every stage has its reverse behind the scenes. I have gone out sometimes, my heart boiling, carried away by an impulse to rush hunting through Paris, to attach myself to some handsome woman I might meet, to follow her to her door, watch her, write to her, throw myself on her mercy, and conquer her by sheer force of passion. My poor uncle, a heart consumed by charity, a child of seventy years as clear-sighted as God, as guileless as a man of genius, no doubt read the tumult of my soul; for when he felt the tether by which he held me strained too tightly and ready to break, he would never fail to say, 'Here, Maurice, you too are poor! Here are twenty francs; go and amuse yourself, you are not a priest!' And if you could then have seen the dancing light that gilded his gray eyes, the smile that relaxed his fine lips,

puckering the corners of his mouth, the adorable expression of that august face, whose native ugliness was redeemed by the spirit of an apostle, you would understand the feeling which made me answer the Curé of White Friars only with a kiss, as if he had been my mother.

"'In Comte Octave you will find not a master, but a friend,' said my uncle on the way to the Rue Payenne. 'But he is distrustful, or to be more exact, he is cautious. The statesman's friendship can be won only with time; for in spite of his deep insight and his habit of gauging men, he was deceived by the man you are succeeding, and nearly became a victim to his abuse of confidence. This is enough to guide you in your behavior to him.'

"When we knocked at the enormous outer door of a house as large as the Hotel Carnavalet, with a courtyard in front and a garden behind, the sound rang as in a desert. While my uncle inquired of an old porter in livery if the Count were at home, I cast my eyes, seeing everything at once, over the courtyard where the cobblestones were hidden in grass, the blackened walls where little gardens were flourishing above the decorations of the elegant architecture, and on the roof, as high as that of the Tuileries. The balustrade of the upper balconies was eaten away. Through a magnificent colonnade I could see a second court on one side, where were the offices; the door was rotting. An old coachman was there cleaning an old carriage. The indifferent air of this servant allowed me to assume that the handsome stables, where of old so many horses had whinnied, now sheltered two at most. The handsome façade of the house seemed to me gloomy, like that of a mansion belonging to the State or the Crown, and given up to some public office. A bell rang as we walked across, my uncle and I, from the porter's lodge—'Inquire of the Porter' was still written over the door—toward the outside steps, where a footman came out in a livery like that of Labranche at the Théâtre Français in the old stock plays. A visitor was so rare that the servant was putting his coat on when he opened a glass door

with small panes, on each side of which the smoke of a lamp had traced patterns on the walls.

"A hall so magnificent as to be worthy of Versailles ended in a staircase such as will never again be built in France, taking up as much space as the whole of a modern house. As we went up the marble steps, as cold as tombstones, and wide enough for eight persons to walk abreast, our tread echoed under sonorous vaulting. The banister charmed the eye by its miraculous workmanship—goldsmith's work in iron—wrought by the fancy of an artist of the time of Henri III. Chilled as by an icy mantle that fell on our shoulders, we went through anterooms, drawing-rooms opening one out of the other, with carpetless parquet floors, and furnished with such splendid antiquities as from thence would find their way to the curiosity dealers. At last we reached a large study in a cross wing, with all the windows looking into an immense garden.

" 'Monsieur le Curé of the White Friars, and his nephew, Monsieur de l'Hostal,' said Labranche, to whose care the other theatrical servant had consigned us in the first antechamber.

"Comte Octave, dressed in long trousers and a gray flannel morning coat, rose from his seat by a huge writing-table, came to the fireplace, and signed to me to sit down, while he went forward to take my uncle's hands, which he pressed.

" 'Though I am in the parish of Saint-Paul,' said he, 'I could scarcely have failed to hear of the Curé of the White Friars, and I am happy to make his acquaintance.'

" 'Your Excellency is most kind,' replied my uncle. 'I have brought to you my only remaining relation. While I believe that I am offering a good gift to your Excellency, I hope at the same time to give my nephew a second father.'

" 'As to that, I can only reply, Monsieur l'Abbé, when we shall have tried each other,' said Comte Octave. 'Your name?' he added to me.

" 'Maurice.'

" 'He has taken his doctor's degree in law,' my uncle observed.

" 'Very good, very good!' said the Count, looking at me from head to foot. 'Monsieur l'Abbé, I hope that for your nephew's sake in the first instance, and then for mine, you will do me the honor of dining here every Monday. That will be our family dinner, our family party.'

"My uncle and the Count then began to talk of religion from the political point of view, of charitable institutes, the repression of crime, and I could at my leisure study the man on whom my fate would henceforth depend. The Count was of middle height; it was impossible to judge of his build on account of his dress, but he seemed to me to be lean and spare. His face was harsh and hollow; the features were refined. His mouth, which was rather large, expressed both irony and kindliness. His forehead, perhaps too spacious, was as intimidating as that of a madman, all the more so from the contrast of the lower part of the face, which ended squarely in a short chin very near the lower lip. Small eyes, of turquoise blue, were as keen and bright as those of the Prince de Talleyrand—which I admired at a later time—and endowed, like the Prince's, with the faculty of becoming expressionless to the verge of gloom; and they added to the singularity of a face that was not pale but yellow. This complexion seemed to bespeak an irritable temper and violent passions. His hair, already silvered, and carefully dressed, seemed to furrow his head with streaks of black and white alternately. The trimness of this head spoiled the resemblance I had remarked in the Count to the wonderful monk described by Lewis after Schedoni in the 'Confessional of the Black Penitents' ('The Italian'), a superior creation, as it seems to me, to 'The Monk.'

"The Count was already shaved, having to attend early at the law courts. Two candelabra with four lights, screened by lamp-shades, were still burning at the opposite ends of the writing-table, and showed plainly that the magistrate rose long before daylight. His hands, which I saw when he took hold of the bell-pull to summon his servant, were extremely fine, and as white as a woman's.

"As I tell you this story," said the Consul-General, interrupting himself, "I am altering the titles and the social position of this gentleman, while placing him in circumstances analogous to what his really were. His profession, rank, luxury, fortune, and style of living were the same; all these details are true, but I will not be false to my benefactor, nor to my usual habits of discretion.

"Instead of feeling—as I really was, socially speaking—an insect in the presence of an eagle," the narrator went on after a pause, "I felt I know not what indefinable impression from the Count's appearance, which, however, I can now account for. Artists of genius" (and he bowed gracefully to the Ambassador, the distinguished lady, and the two Frenchmen), "real statesmen, poets, a general who has commanded armies—in short, all really great minds, are simple, and their simplicity places you on a level with themselves. —You who are all of superior minds," he said, addressing his guests, "have perhaps observed how feeling can bridge over the distances created by society. If we are inferior to you in intellect, we can be your equals in devoted friendship. By the temperature—allow me the word—of our hearts I felt myself as near my patron as I was far below him in rank. In short, the soul has its clairvoyance; it has presentiments of suffering, grief, joy, antagonism, or hatred in others.

"I vaguely discerned the symptoms of a mystery, from recognizing in the Count the same effects of physiognomy as I had observed in my uncle. The exercise of virtue, serenity of conscience, and purity of mind had transfigured my uncle, who from being ugly had become quite beautiful. I detected a metamorphosis of a reverse kind in the Count's face; at the first glance I thought he was about fifty-five, but after an attentive examination I found youth entombed under the ice of a great sorrow, under the fatigue of persistent study, under the glowing hues of some suppressed passion. At a word from my uncle the Count's eyes recovered for a moment the softness of the periwinkle flower, and he had an admirable

smile, which revealed what I believed to be his real age, about forty. These observations I made, not then but afterward, as I recalled the circumstances of my visit.

"The manservant came in carrying a tray with his master's breakfast on it.

" 'I did not ask for breakfast,' remarked the Count; 'but leave it, and show Monsieur to his rooms.'

"I followed the servant, who led the way to a complete set of pretty rooms, under a terrace, between the great courtyard and the servants' quarters, over a corridor of communication between the kitchens and the grand staircase. When I returned to the Count's study, I overheard, before opening the door, my uncle pronouncing this judgment on me: 'He may do wrong, for he has strong feelings, and we are all liable to honorable mistakes; but he has no vices.'

" 'Well,' said the Count, with a kindly look, 'do you like yourself there? Tell me. There are so many rooms in this barrack that, if you were not comfortable, I could put you elsewhere.'

" 'At my uncle's I had but one room,' replied I.

" 'Well, you can settle yourself this evening,' said the Count, 'for your possessions, no doubt, are such as all students own, and a hackney coach will be enough to convey them. To-day we will all three dine together,' and he looked at my uncle.

"A splendid library opened from the Count's study, and he took us in there, showing me a pretty little recess decorated with paintings, which had formerly served, no doubt, as an oratory.

" 'This is your cell,' said he. 'You will sit there when you have to work with me, for you will not be tethered by a chain'; and he explained in detail the kind and duration of my employment with him. As I listened I felt that he was a great political teacher.

"It took me about a month to familiarize myself with people and things, to learn the duties of my new office, and accustom myself to the Count's methods. A secretary neces-

sarily watches the man who makes use of him. That man's tastes, passions, temper, and manias become the subject of involuntary study. The union of their two minds is at once more and less than a marriage.

"During these months the Count and I reciprocally studied each other. I learned with astonishment that Comte Octave was but thirty-seven years old. The merely superficial peacefulness of his life and the propriety of his conduct were the outcome not solely of a deep sense of duty and of stoical reflection; in my constant intercourse with this man —an extraordinary man to those who knew him well—I felt vast depths beneath his toil, beneath his acts of politeness, his mask of benignity, his assumption of resignation, which so closely resembled calmness that it was easy to mistake it. Just as when walking through forest-lands certain soils give forth under our feet a sound which enables us to guess whether they are dense masses of stone or a void; so intense egoism, though hidden under the flowers of politeness, and subterranean caverns eaten out by sorrow sound hollow under the constant touch of familiar life. It was sorrow and not despondency that dwelt in that really great soul. The Count had understood that action, deeds, are the supreme law of social man. And he went on his way in spite of secret wounds, looking to the future with a tranquil eye, like a martyr full of faith.

"His concealed sadness, the bitter disenchantment from which he suffered, had not led him into philosophical deserts of incredulity; this brave statesman was religious, but without ostentation; he always attended the earliest mass at Saint-Paul's for pious workmen and servants. Not one of his friends, no one at Court, knew that he so punctually fulfilled the practice of religion. He was addicted to God as some men are addicted to a vice, with the greatest mystery. Thus one day I came to find the Count at the summit of an Alp of woe much higher than that on which many are who think themselves the most tired; who laugh at the passions and the beliefs of others because they have conquered

their own; who play variations in every key of irony and disdain. He did not mock at those who still follow hope into the swamps whither she leads, nor those who climb a peak to be alone, nor those who persist in the fight, reddening the arena with their blood and strewing it with their illusions. He looked on the world as a whole; he mastered its beliefs; he listened to its complaining; he was doubtful of affection, and yet more of self-sacrifice; but this great and stern judge pitied them, or admired them, not with transient enthusiasm, but with silence, concentration, and the communion of a deeply-touched soul. He was a sort of Catholic Manfred, and unstained by crime, carrying his choiceness into his faith, melting the snows by the fires of a sealed volcano, holding converse with a star seen by himself alone!

"I detected many dark riddles in his ordinary life. He evaded my gaze not like a traveller who, following a path, disappears from time to time in dells or ravines according to the formation of the soil, but like a sharpshooter who is being watched, who wants to hide himself, and seeks a cover. I could not account for his frequent absences at the times when he was working the hardest, and of which he made no secret from me, for he would say, 'Go on with this for me,' and trust me with the work in hand.

"This man, wrapped in the threefold duties of the statesman, the judge, and the orator, charmed me by a taste for flowers, which shows an elegant mind, and which is shared by almost all persons of refinement. His garden and his study were full of the rarest plants, but he always bought them half-withered. Perhaps it pleased him to see such an image of his own fate! He was faded like these dying flowers, whose almost decaying fragrance mounted strangely to his brain. The Count loved his country; he devoted himself to public interests with the frenzy of a heart that seeks to cheat some other passion; but the studies and work into which he threw himself were not enough for him; there were frightful struggles in his mind, of which some echoes reached me. Finally, he would give utterance to harrowing aspira-

tions for happiness, and it seemed to me he ought yet to be happy; but what was the obstacle? Was there a woman he loved? This was a question I asked myself. You may imagine the extent of the circles of torment that my mind had searched before coming to so simple and so terrible a question. Notwithstanding his efforts, my patron did not succeed in stifling the movements of his heart. Under his austere manner, under the reserve of the magistrate, a passion rebelled, though coerced with such force that no one but I who lived with him ever guessed the secret. His motto seemed to be, 'I suffer, and am silent.' The escort of respect and admiration which attended him; the friendship of workers as valiant as himself—Granville and Sérizy, both presiding judges—had no hold over the Count: either he told them nothing, or they knew all. Impassible and lofty in public, the Count betrayed the man only on rare intervals when, alone in his garden or his study, he supposed himself unobserved; but then he was a child again, he gave course to the tears hidden beneath the toga, to the excitement which, if wrongly interpreted, might have damaged his credit for perspicacity as a statesman.

"When all this had become to me a matter of certainty, Comte Octavo had all the attractions of a problem, and won on my affection as much as though he had been my own father. Can you enter into the feeling of curiosity, tempered by respect? What catastrophe had blasted this learned man, who, like Pitt, had devoted himself from the age of eighteen to the studies indispensable to power, while he had no ambition; this judge, who thoroughly knew the law of nations, political law, civil and criminal law, and who could find in these a weapon against every anxiety, against every mistake; this profound legislator, this serious writer, this pious celibate whose life sufficiently proved that he was open to no reproach? A criminal could not have been more hardly punished by God than was my master; sorrow had robbed him of half his slumbers; he never slept more than four hours. What struggle was it that went on in the depths of

these hours apparently so calm, so studious, passing without a sound or a murmur, during which I often detected him, when the pen had dropped from his fingers, with his head resting on one hand, his eyes like two fixed stars, and sometimes wet with tears? How could the waters of that living spring flow over the burning strand without being dried up by the subterranean fire? Was there below it, as there is under the sea, between it and the central fires of the globe, a bed of granite? And would the volcano burst at last?

"Sometimes the Count would give me a look of that sagacious and keen-eyed curiosity by which one man searches another when he desires an accomplice; then he shunned my eye as he saw it open a mouth, so to speak, insisting on a reply, and seeming to say, 'Speak first!' Now and then Comte Octave's melancholy was surly and gruff. If these spurts of temper offended me, he could get over it without thinking of asking my pardon; but then his manners were gracious to the point of Christian humility.

"When I became attached like a son to this man—to me such a mystery, but so intelligible to the outer world, to whom the epithet eccentric is enough to account for all the enigmas of the heart—I changed the state of the house. Neglect of his own interests was carried by the Count to the length of folly in the management of his affairs. Possessing an income of about a hundred and sixty thousand francs, without including the emoluments of his appointments—three of which did not come under the law against plurality—he spent sixty thousand, of which at least thirty thousand went to his servants. By the end of the first year I had got rid of all these rascals, and begged His Excellency to use his influence in helping me to get honest servants. By the end of the second year the Count, better fed and better served, enjoyed the comforts of modern life; he had fine horses, supplied by a coachman to whom I paid so much a month for each horse; his dinners on his reception days, furnished by Chevet at a price agreed upon, did him credit; his daily meals were prepared by an excellent

cook found by my uncle, and helped by two kitchenmaids. The expenditure for housekeeping, not including purchases, was no more than thirty thousand francs a year; we had two additional menservants, whose care restored the poetical aspect of the house; for this old palace, splendid even in its rust, had an air of dignity which neglect had dishonored.

"'I am no longer astonished,' said he, on hearing of these results, 'at the fortunes made by my servants. In seven years I have had two cooks, who have become rich restaurant-keepers.'

"'And in seven years you have lost a hundred thousand francs,' replied I. 'You, a judge, who in your court sign summonses against crime, encouraged robbery in your own house.'

"Early in the year 1826 the Count had, no doubt, ceased to watch me, and we were as closely attached as two men can be when one is subordinate to the other. He had never spoken to me of my future prospects, but he had taken an interest, both as a master and as a father, in training me. He often required me to collect materials for his most arduous labors; I drew up some of his reports, and he corrected them, showing the difference between his interpretation of the law, his views and mine. When at last I had produced a document which he could give in as his own he was delighted; this satisfaction was my reward, and he could see that I took it so. This little incident produced an extraordinary effect on a soul which seemed so stern. The Count pronounced sentence on me, to use a legal phrase, as supreme and royal judge; he took my head in his hands, and kissed me on the forehead.

"'Maurice,' he exclaimed, 'you are no longer my apprentice; I know not yet what you will be to me—but if no change occurs in my life, perhaps you will take the place of a son.'

"Comte Octave had introduced me to the best houses in Paris, whither I went in his stead, with his servants and carriage, on the too frequent occasions when, on the point

of starting, he changed his mind, and sent for a hackney cab to take him—Where?—that was the mystery. By the welcome I met with I could judge of the Count's feelings toward me, and the earnestness of his recommendations. He supplied all my wants with the thoughtfulness of a father, and with all the greater liberality because my modesty left it to him always to think of me. Toward the end of January, 1827, at the house of the Comtesse de Sérizy, I had such persistent ill-luck at play that I lost two thousand francs, and I would not draw them out of my savings. Next morning I asked myself, 'Had I better ask my uncle for the money, or put my confidence in the Count?'

"I decided on the second alternative.

"'Yesterday,' said I, when he was at breakfast, 'I lost persistently at play; I was provoked, and went on; I owe two thousand francs. Will you allow me to draw the sum on account of my year's salary?'

"'No,' said he, with the sweetest smile, 'when a man plays in society, he must have a gambling purse. Draw six thousand francs; pay your debts. Henceforth we must go halves; for since you are my representative on most occasions, your self-respect must not be made to suffer for it.'

"I made no speech of thanks. Thanks would have been superfluous between us. This shade shows the character of our relations. And yet we had not yet unlimited confidence in each other; he did not open to me the vast subterranean chambers which I had detected in his secret life; and I, for my part, never said to him, 'What ails you? From what are you suffering?'

"What could he be doing during those long evenings? He would often come in on foot or in a hackney cab when I returned in a carriage—I, his secretary! Was so pious a man a prey to vices hidden under hypocrisy? Did he expend all the powers of his mind to satisfy a jealousy more dexterous than Othello's? Did he live with some woman unworthy of him? One morning, on returning from I have forgotten what shop, where I had just paid a bill, be-

tween the Church of Saint-Paul and the Hotel de Ville, I came across Comte Octave in such eager conversation with an old woman that he did not see me. The appearance of this hag filled me with strange suspicions, suspicions that were all the better founded because I never found that the Count invested his savings. Is it not shocking to think of? I was constituting myself my patron's censor. At that time I knew that he had more than six hundred thousand francs to invest; and if he had bought securities of any kind, his confidence in me was so complete in all that concerned his pecuniary interests, that I certainly should have known it.

"Sometimes, in the morning, the Count took exercise in his garden, to and fro, like a man to whom a walk is the hippogriff ridden by dreamy melancholy. He walked and walked! And he rubbed his hands enough to rub the skin off. And then, if I met him unexpectedly as he came to the angle of a path, I saw his face beaming. His eyes, instead of the hardness of a turquoise, had that velvety softness of the blue periwinkle, which had so much struck me on the occasion of my first visit, by reason of the astonishing contrast in the two different looks: the look of a happy man, and the look of an unhappy man. Two or three times at such a moment he had taken me by the arm and led me on; then he had said, 'What have you come to ask?' instead of pouring out his joy into my heart that opened to him. But more often, especially since I could do his work for him and write his reports, the unhappy man would sit for hours staring at the goldfish that swarmed in a handsome marble basin in the middle of the garden, round which grew an amphitheatre of the finest flowers. He, an accomplished statesman, seemed to have succeeded in making a passion of the mechanical amusement of crumbling bread to fishes.

"This is how the drama was disclosed of this second inner life, so deeply ravaged and storm-tossed, where, in a circle overlooked by Dante in his 'Inferno,' horrible joys had their birth."

The Consul-General paused.

"On a certain Monday," he resumed, "as chance would have it, M. le Président de Granville and M. de Sérizy (at that time Vice-President of the Council of State) had come to hold a meeting at Comte Octave's house. They formed a committee of three, of which I was the secretary. The Count had already got me the appointment of Auditor to the Council of State. All the documents requisite for their inquiry into the political matter privately submitted to these three gentlemen were laid out on one of the long tables in the library. MM. de Granville and de Sérizy had trusted to the Count to make the preliminary examination of the papers relating to the matter. To avoid the necessity for carrying all the papers to M. de Sérizy, as president of the commission, it was decided that they should meet first in the Rue Payenne. The Cabinet at the Tuileries attached great importance to this piece of work, of which the chief burden fell on me—and to which I owed my appointment, in the course of that year, to be Master of Appeals.

"Though the Comtes de Granville and de Sérizy, whose habits were much the same as my patron's, never dined away from home, we were still discussing the matter at a late hour, when we were startled by the manservant calling me aside to say, 'MM. the Curés of Saint-Paul and of the White Friars have been waiting in the drawing-room for two hours.'

"It was nine o'clock.

" 'Well, gentlemen, you find yourselves compelled to dine with priests,' said Comte Octave to his colleagues. 'I do not know whether Granville can overcome his horror of a priest's gown—'

" 'It depends on the priest.'

" 'One of them is my uncle, and the other is the Abbé Gaudron,' said I. 'Do not be alarmed; the Abbé Fontanon is no longer second priest at Saint-Paul—'

" 'Well, let us dine,' replied the Président de Granville. 'A bigot frightens me, but there is no one so cheerful as a truly pious man.'

"We went into the drawing-room. The dinner was de-

lightful. Men of real information, politicians to whom business gives both consummate experience and the practice of speech, are admirable story-tellers, when they tell stories. With them there is no medium; they are either heavy, or they are sublime. In this delightful sport Prince Metternich is as good as Charles Nodier. The fun of a statesman, cut in facets like a diamond, is sharp, sparkling, and full of sense. Being sure that the proprieties would be observed by these three superior men, my uncle allowed his wit full play, a refined wit, gentle, penetrating, and elegant, like that of all men who are accustomed to conceal their thoughts under the black robe. And you may rely upon it, there was nothing vulgar nor idle in this light talk, which I would compare, for its effect on the soul, to Rossini's music.

"The Abbé Gaudron was, as M. de Granville said, a Saint Peter rather than a Saint Paul, a peasant full of faith, as square on his feet as he was tall, a sacerdotal of whose ignorance in matters of the world and of literature enlivened the conversation by guileless amazement and unexpected questions. They came to talking of one of the plague spots of social life, of which we were just now speaking—adultery. My uncle remarked on the contradiction which the legislators of the Code, still feeling the blows of the revolutionary storm, had established between civil and religious law, and which he said was at the root of all the mischief.

" 'In the eyes of the Church,' said he, 'adultery is a crime; in those of your tribunals it is a misdemeanor. Adultery drives to the police court in a carriage instead of standing at the bar to be tried. Napoleon's Council of State, touched with tenderness toward erring women, was quite inefficient. Ought they not in this case to have harmonized the civil and the religious law, and have sent the guilty wife to a convent, as of old?'

" 'To a convent!' said M. de Sérizy. 'They must first have created convents, and in those days monasteries were being turned into barracks. Besides, think of what you say, M. l'Abbé—give to God what society would have none of?'

"'Oh!' said the Comte de Granville, 'you do not know France. They were obliged to leave the husband free to take proceedings: well, there are not ten cases of adultery brought up in a year.'

"'M. l'Abbé preaches for his own saint, for it was Jesus Christ who invented adultery,' said Comte Octave. 'In the East, the cradle of the human race, woman was merely a luxury, and there was regarded as a chattel; no virtues were demanded of her but obedience and beauty. By exalting the soul above the body, the modern family in Europe—a daughter of Christ—invented indissoluble marriage, and made it a sacrament.'

"'Ah! the Church saw all the difficulties,' exclaimed M. de Granville.

"'This institution has given rise to a new world,' the Count went on with a smile. 'But the practices of that world will never be that of a climate where women are marriageable at seven years of age, and more than old at five-and-twenty. The Catholic Church overlooked the needs of half the globe. —So let us discuss Europe only.

"'Is woman our superior or our inferior? That is the real question so far as we are concerned. If woman is our inferior, by placing her on so high a level as the Church does, fearful punishments for adultery were needful. And formerly that was what was done. The cloister or death sums up early legislation. But since then practice has modified the law, as is always the case. The throne served as a hotbed for adultery, and the increase of this inviting crime marks the decline of the dogmas of the Catholic Church. In these days, in cases where the Church now exacts no more than sincere repentance from the erring wife, society is satisfied with a brand-mark instead of an execution. The law still condemns the guilty, but it no longer terrifies them. In short, there are two standards of morals: that of the world, and that of the Code. Where the Code is weak, as I admit with our dear Abbé, the world is audacious and satirical. There are so few judges who would not gladly have com-

mitted the fault against which they hurl the rather stolid thunders of their "Inasmuch." The world, which gives the lie to the law alike in its rejoicings, in its habits, and in its pleasures, is severer than the Code and the Church; the world punishes a blunder after encouraging hypocrisy. The whole economy of the law on marriage seems to me to require reconstruction from the bottom to the top. The French law would be perfect perhaps if it excluded daughters from inheriting.'

"'We three among us know the question very thoroughly,' said the Comte de Granville with a laugh. 'I have a wife I cannot live with. Sérizy has a wife who will not live with him. As for you, Octave, yours ran away from you. So we three represent every case of the conjugal conscience, and, no doubt, if ever divorce is brought in again, we shall form the committee.'

"Octave's fork dropped on his glass, broke it, and broke his plate. He had turned as pale as death, and flashed a thunderous glare at M. de Granville, by which he hinted at my presence, and which I caught.

"'Forgive me, my dear fellow. I did not see Maurice,' the Président went on. 'Sérizy and I, after being the witnesses to your marriage, became your accomplices; I did not think I was committing an indiscretion in the presence of these two venerable priests.'

"M. de Sérizy changed the subject by relating all he had done to please his wife without ever succeeding. The old man concluded that it was impossible to regulate human sympathies and antipathies; he maintained that social law was never more perfect than when it was nearest to natural law. Now, Nature takes no account of the affinities of souls; her aim is fulfilled by the propagation of the species. Hence, the Code, in its present form, was wise in leaving a wide latitude to chance. The incapacity of daughters to inherit so long as there were male heirs was an excellent provision, whether to hinder the degeneration of the race, or to make households happier by abolishing scandalous unions and giving the sole preference to moral qualities and beauty.

" 'But then,' he exclaimed, lifting his hand with a gesture of disgust, 'how are we to perfect legislation in a country which insists on bringing together seven or eight hundred legislators!—After all, if I am sacrificed,' he added, 'I have a child to succeed me.'

" 'Setting aside all the religious question,' my uncle said, 'I would remark to your Excellency that Nature only owes us life, and that it is society that owes us happiness. Are you a father?' asked my uncle.

" 'And I—have I any children?' said Comte Octave in a hollow voice, and his tone made such an impression that there was no more talk of wives or marriage.

"When coffee had been served, the two Counts and the two priests stole away, seeing that poor Octave had fallen into a fit of melancholy, which prevented his noticing their disappearance. My patron was sitting in an armchair by the fire, in the attitude of a man crushed.

" 'You now know the secret of my life,' said he to me on noticing that we were alone. 'After three years of married life, one evening when I came in I found a letter in which the Countess announced her flight. The letter did not lack dignity, for it is in the nature of women to preserve some virtues even when committing that horrible sin.—The story now is that my wife went abroad in a ship that was wrecked; she is supposed to be dead. I have lived alone for seven years! —Enough for this evening, Maurice. We will talk of my situation when I have grown used to the idea of speaking of it to you. When we suffer from a chronic disease, it needs time to become accustomed to improvement. That improvement often seems to be merely another aspect of the complaint.'

"I went to bed greatly agitated; for the mystery, far from being explained, seemed to me more obscure than ever. I foresaw some strange drama indeed, for I understood that there could be no vulgar difference between the woman the Count could choose and such a character as his. The events which had driven the Countess to leave a man so noble, so

amiable, so perfect, so loving, so worthy to be loved, must have been singular, to say the least. M. de Granville's remark had been like a torch flung into the caverns over which I had so long been walking; and though the flame lighted them but dimly, my eyes could perceive their wide extent! I could imagine the Count's sufferings without knowing their depth or their bitterness. That sallow face, those parched temples, those overwhelming studies, those moments of absent-mindedness, the smallest details of the life of this married bachelor, all stood out in luminous relief during the hour of mental questioning, which is, as it were, the twilight before sleep, and to which any man would have given himself up, as I did.

"Oh! how I loved my poor master! He seemed to me sublime. I read a poem of melancholy, I saw perpetual activity in the heart I had accused of being torpid. Must not supreme grief always come at last to stagnation? Had this judge, who had so much in his power, ever revenged himself? Was he feeding himself on her long agony? Is it not a remarkable thing in Paris to keep anger always seething for ten years? What had Octave done since this great misfortune—for the separation of husband and wife is a great misfortune in our day, when domestic life has become a social question, which it never was of old?

"We allowed a few days to pass on the watch, for great sorrows have a diffidence of their own; but at last, one evening, the Count said in a grave voice: 'Stay.'

"This, as nearly as may be, is his story.

" 'My father had a ward, rich and lovely, who was sixteen at the time when I came back from college to live in this old house. Honorine, who had been brought up by my mother, was just awaking to life. Full of grace and of child-like ways, she dreamed of happiness as she would have dreamed of jewels; perhaps happiness seemed to her the jewels of the soul. Her piety was not free from puerile pleasures; for everything, even religion, was poetry to her

ingenuous heart. She looked to the future as a perpetual fête. Innocent and pure, no delirium had disturbed her dream. Shame and grief had never tinged her cheek nor moistened her eye. She did not even inquire into the secret of her involuntary emotions on a fine spring day. And then, she felt that she was weak and destined to obedience, and she awaited marriage without wishing for it. Her smiling imagination knew nothing of the corruption—necessary perhaps —which literature imparts by depicting the passions; she knew nothing of the world, and was ignorant of all the dangers of society. The dear child had suffered so little that she had not even developed her courage. In short, her guilelessness would have led her to walk fearless among serpents, like the ideal figure of Innocence a painter once created. We lived together like two brothers.

"'At the end of a year I said to her one day, in the garden of this house, by the basin, as we stood throwing crumbs to the fish: "Would you like that we should be married? With me you could do whatever you please, while another man would make you unhappy."

"'"Mamma," said she to my mother, who came out to join us, "Octave and I have agreed to be married—"

"'"What! at seventeen?" said my mother. "No; you must wait eighteen months; and if eighteen months hence you like each other, well, your birth and fortunes are equal, you can make a marriage which is suitable, as well as being a love match."

"'When I was six-and-twenty, and Honorine nineteen, we were married. Our respect for my father and mother, old folk of the Bourbon Court, hindered us from making this house fashionable, or renewing the furniture; we lived on, as we had done in the past, as children. However, I went into society; I initiated my wife into the world of fashion; and I regarded it as one of my duties to instruct her.

"'I recognized afterward that marriages contracted under such circumstances as ours bear in themselves a rock

against which many affections are wrecked, many prudent calculations, many lives. The husband becomes a pedagogue, or, if you like, a professor, and love perishes under the rod which, sooner or later, gives pain; for a young and handsome wife, at once discreet and laughter-loving, will not accept any superiority above that with which she is endowed by nature. Perhaps I was in the wrong? During the difficult beginnings of a household I, perhaps, assumed a magisterial tone? On the other hand, I may have made the mistake of trusting too entirely to that artless nature; I kept no watch over the Countess, in whom revolt seemed to me impossible? Alas! neither in politics nor in domestic life has it yet been ascertained whether empires and happiness are wrecked by too much confidence or too much severity! Perhaps, again, the husband failed to realize Honorine's girlish dreams? Who can tell, while happy days last, what precepts he has neglected?'

"I remember only the broad outlines of the reproaches the Count addressed to himself, with all the good faith of an anatomist seeking the cause of a disease which might be overlooked by his brethren; but his merciful indulgence struck me then as really worthy of that of Jesus Christ when He rescued the woman taken in adultery.

" 'It was eighteen months after my father's death—my mother followed him to the tomb in a few months—when the fearful night came which surprised me by Honorine's farewell letter. What poetic delusion had seduced my wife? Was it through her senses? Was it the magnetism of misfortune or of genius? Which of these powers had taken her by storm or misled her?—I would not know. The blow was so terrible that for a month I remained stunned. Afterward, reflection counselled me to continue in ignorance, and Honorine's misfortunes have since taught me too much about all these things.—So far, Maurice, the story is commonplace enough; but one word will change it all: I love Honorine, I have never ceased to worship her. From the day when she left me I have lived on memory;

one by one I recall the pleasures for which Honorine no doubt had no taste.

"'Oh!' said he, seeing the amazement in my eyes, 'do not make a hero of me, do not think me such a fool, as a Colonel of the Empire would say, as to have sought no diversion. Alas, my boy! I was either too young or too much in love; I have not in the whole world met with another woman. After frightful struggles with myself, I tried to forget; money in hand, I stood on the very threshold of infidelity, but there the memory of Honorine rose before me like a white statue. As I recalled the infinite delicacy of that exquisite skin, through which the blood might be seen coursing and the nerves quivering; as I saw in fancy that ingenuous face, as guileless on the eve of my sorrows as on the day when I said to her, "Shall we marry?" as I remembered a heavenly fragrance, the very odor of virtue, and the light in her eyes, the prettiness of her movements, I fled like a man preparing to violate a tomb, who sees emerging from it the transfigured soul of the dead. At consultations, in Court, by night, I dream so incessantly of Honorine that only by excessive strength of mind do I succeed in attending to what I am doing and saying. This is the secret of my labors.

"'Well, I felt no more anger with her than a father can feel on seeing his beloved child in some danger it has imprudently rushed into. I understood that I had made a poem of my wife—a poem I delighted in with such intoxication that I fancied she shared the intoxication. Ah! Maurice, an indiscriminating passion in a husband is a mistake that may lead to any crime in a wife. I had no doubt left all the faculties of this child, loved as a child, entirely unemployed; I had perhaps wearied her with my love before the hour of loving had struck for her! Too young to understand that in the constancy of the wife lies the germ of the mother's devotion, she mistook this first test of marriage for life itself, and the refractory child cursed life, unknown to me, not daring to complain to me,

out of sheer modesty perhaps! In so cruel a position she would be defenceless against any man who stirred her deeply.—And I, so wise a judge as they say—I, who have a kind heart, but whose mind was absorbed—I understood too late these unwritten laws of the woman's code, I read them by the light of the fire that wrecked my roof. Then I constituted my heart a tribunal by virtue of the law, for the law makes the husband a judge: I acquitted my wife, and I condemned myself. But love took possession of me as a passion, the mean, despotic passion which comes over some old men. At this day I love the absent Honorine as a man of sixty loves a woman whom he must possess at any cost, and yet I feel the strength of a young man. I have the insolence of the old man and the reserve of a boy.—My dear fellow, society only laughs at such a desperate conjugal predicament. Where it pities a lover, it regards a husband as ridiculously inept; it makes sport of those who cannot keep the woman they have secured under the canopy of the Church, and before the Maire's scarf of office. And I had to keep silence.

" 'Sérizy is happy. His indulgence allows him to see his wife; he can protect and defend her; and, as he adores her, he knows all the perfect joys of a benefactor whom nothing can disturb, not even ridicule, for he pours it himself on his fatherly pleasures. "I remain married only for my wife's sake," he said to me one day on coming out of court.

" 'But I—I have nothing; I have not even to face ridicule, I who live solely on a love which is starving! I who can never find a word to say to a woman of the world! I who loathe prostitution! I who am faithful under a spell! —But for my religious faith, I should have killed myself. I have defied the gulf of hard work; I have thrown myself into it, and come out again alive, fevered, burning, bereft of sleep!—'

"I cannot remember all the words of this eloquent man, to whom passion gave an eloquence indeed so far above that of the pleader that, as I listened to him, I, like him, felt my

cheeks wet with tears. You may conceive of my feelings when, after a pause, during which we dried them away, he finished his story with this revelation:

"'This is the drama of my soul, but it is not the actual living drama which is at this moment being acted in Paris! The interior drama interests nobody. I know it; and you will one day admit that it is so, you, who at this moment shed tears with me; no one can burden his heart or his skin with another's pain. The measure of our sufferings is in ourselves.—You even understand my sorrows only by very vague analogy. Could you see me calming the most violent frenzy of despair by the contemplation of a miniature in which I can see and kiss her brow, the smile on her lips, the shape of her face, can breathe the whiteness of her skin; which enables me almost to feel, to play with the black masses of her curling hair? Could you see me when I leap with hope—when I writhe under the myriad darts of despair—when I tramp through the mire of Paris to quell my irritation by fatigue? I have fits of collapse comparable to those of a consumptive patient, moods of wild hilarity, terrors as of a murderer who meets a sergeant of police. In short, my life is a continual paroxysm of fears, joy, and dejection.

"'As to the drama—it is this. You imagine that I am occupied with the Council of State, the Chamber, the Courts, Politics.—Why, dear me, seven hours at night are enough for all that, so much are my faculties overwrought by the life I lead! Honorine is my real concern. To recover my wife is my only study; to guard her in her cage, without her suspecting that she is in my power; to satisfy her needs, to supply the little pleasure she allows herself, to be always about her like a sylph without allowing her to see or to suspect me, for if she did the future would be lost—that is my life, my true life.—For seven years I have never gone to bed without going first to see the light of her night-lamp, or her shadow on the window curtains.

"'She left my house, choosing to take nothing but the

dress she wore that day. The child carried her magnanimity to the point of folly! Consequently, eighteen months after her flight she was deserted by her lover, who was appalled by the cold, cruel, sinister, and revolting aspect of poverty—the coward! The man had, no doubt, counted on the easy and luxurious life in Switzerland or Italy which fine ladies indulge in when they leave their husbands. Honorine has sixty thousand francs a year of her own. The wretch left the dear creature expecting an infant, and without a penny. In the month of November, 1820, I found means to persuade the best *accoucheur* in Paris to play the part of a humble suburban apothecary. I induced the priest of the parish in which the Countess was living to supply her needs as though he were performing an act of charity. Then to hide my wife, to secure her against discovery, to find her a housekeeper who would be devoted to me and be my intelligent confidante—it was a task worthy of Figaro! You may suppose that to discover where my wife had taken refuge I had only to make up my mind to it.

"'After three months of desperation rather than despair, the idea of devoting myself to Honorine with God only in my secret, was one of those poems which occur only to the heart of a lover through life and death! Love must have its daily food. And ought I not to protect this child, whose guilt was the outcome of my imprudence, against fresh disaster—to fulfil my part, in short, as a guardian angel?—At the age of seven months her infant died, happily for her and for me. For nine months more my wife lay between life and death, deserted at the time when she most needed a manly arm; but this arm,' said he, holding out his own with a gesture of angelic dignity, 'was extended over her head. Honorine was nursed as she would have been in her own home. When, on her recovery, she asked how and by whom she had been assisted, she was told—"By the Sisters of Charity in the neighborhood—by the Maternity Society —by the parish priest, who took an interest in her."

"'This woman, whose pride amounts to a vice, has shown a power of resistance in misfortune which on some evenings I call the obstinacy of a mule. Honorine was bent on earning her living. My wife works! For five years past I have lodged her in the Rue Saint-Maur, in a charming little house, where she makes artificial flowers and articles of fashion. She believes that she sells the product of her elegant fancy-work to a shop, where she is so well paid that she makes twenty francs a day, and in these six years she has never had a moment's suspicion. She pays for everything she needs at about the third of its value, so that on six thousand francs a year she lives as if she had fifteen thousand. She is devoted to flowers, and pays a hundred crowns to a gardener, who costs me twelve hundred in wages, and sends me in a bill for two thousand francs every three months. I have promised the man a market-garden with a house on it close to the porter's lodge in the Rue Saint-Maur. I hold this ground in the name of a clerk of the law courts. The smallest indiscretion would ruin the gardener's prospects. Honorine has her little house, a garden, and a splendid hothouse, for a rent of five hundred francs a year. There she lives under the name of her housekeeper, Madame Gobain, the old woman of impeccable discretion whom I was so lucky as to find, and whose affection Honorine has won. But her zeal, like that of the gardener, is kept hot by the promise of reward at the moment of success. The porter and his wife cost me dreadfully dear for the same reasons. However, for three years Honorine has been happy, believing that she owes to her own toil all the luxury of flowers, dress, and comfort.

"'Oh! I know what you are about to say,' cried the Count, seeing a question in my eyes and on my lips. 'Yes, yes; I have made the attempt. My wife was formerly living in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. One day when, from what Gobain told me, I believed in some chance of a reconciliation, I wrote by post a letter, in

which I tried to propitiate my wife—a letter written and re-written twenty times! I will not describe my agonies. I went from the Rue Payenne to the Rue de Reuilly like a condemned wretch going from the Palais de Justice to his execution, but he goes on a cart, and I was on foot. It was dark—there was a fog; I went to meet Madame Gobain, who was to come and tell me what my wife had done. Honorine, on recognizing my writing, had thrown the letter into the fire without reading it.—"Madame Gobain," she had exclaimed, "I leave this to-morrow."

"'What a dagger-stroke was this to a man who found inexhaustible pleasure in the trickery by which he gets the finest Lyons velvet at twelve francs a yard, a pheasant, a fish, a dish of fruit, for a tenth of their value, for a woman so ignorant as to believe that she is paying ample wages with two hundred and fifty francs to Madame Gobain, a cook fit for a bishop.

"'You have sometimes found me rubbing my hands in the enjoyment of a sort of happiness. Well, I had just succeeded in some ruse worthy of the stage. I had just deceived my wife—I had sent her by a purchaser of wardrobes an Indian shawl, to be offered to her as the property of an actress who had hardly worn it, but in which I—the solemn lawyer whom you know—had wrapped myself for a night! In short, my life at this day may be summed up in the two words which express the extremes of torment—I love, and I wait! I have in Madame Gobain a faithful spy on the heart I worship. I go every evening to chat with the old woman, to hear from her all that Honorine has done during the day, the lightest word she has spoken, for a single exclamation might betray to me the secrets of that soul which is wilfully deaf and dumb. Honorine is pious; she attends the Church services and prays, but she has never been to confession or taken the Communion; she foresees what a priest would tell her. She will not listen to the advice, to the injunction, that she should return to me. This horror of me overwhelms me, dismays me, for I have never

done her the smallest harm. I have always been kind to her. Granting even that I may have been a little hasty when teaching her, that my man's irony may have hurt her legitimate girlish pride, is that a reason for persisting in a determination which only the most implacable hatred could have inspired? Honorine has never told Madame Gobain who she is; she keeps absolute silence as to her marriage, so that the worthy and respectable woman can never speak a word in my favor, for she is the only person in the house who knows my secret. The others know nothing; they live under the awe caused by the name of the Prefect of Police, and their respect for the power of a Minister. Hence it is impossible for me to penetrate that heart; the citadel is mine, but I cannot get into it. I have not a single means of action. An act of violence would ruin me forever.

"'How can I argue against reasons of which I know nothing? Should I write a letter, and have it copied by a public writer, and laid before Honorine? But that would be to run the risk of a third removal. The last cost me fifty thousand francs. The purchase was made in the first instance in the name of the secretary whom you succeeded. The unhappy man, who did not know how lightly I sleep, was detected by me in the act of opening the box in which I had put the private agreement; I coughed, and he was seized with a panic; next day I compelled him to sell the house to the man in whose name it now stands, and I turned him out.

"'If it were not that I feel all my noblest faculties as a man satisfied, happy, expansive; if the part I am playing were not that of divine fatherhood; if I did not drink in delight by every pore, there are moments when I should believe that I was a monomaniac. Sometimes at night I hear the jingling bells of madness. I dread the violent transitions from a feeble hope, which sometimes shines and flashes up, to complete despair, falling as low as man can fall. A few days since I was seriously considering the horrible end of the story of Lovelace and Clarissa Harlowe, and

saying to myself, If Honorine were the mother of a child of mine, must she not necessarily return under her husband's roof?

"'And I have such complete faith in a happy future, that ten months ago I bought and paid for one of the handsomest houses in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré. If I win back Honorine, I will not allow her to see this house again, nor the room from which she fled. I mean to place my idol in a new temple, where she may feel that life is altogether new. That house is being made a marvel of elegance and taste. I have been told of a poet who, being almost mad with love for an actress, bought the handsomest bed in Paris without knowing how the actress would reward his passion. Well, one of the coldest of lawyers, a man who is supposed to be the gravest adviser of the Crown, was stirred to the depths of his heart by that anecdote. The orator of the Legislative Chamber can understand the poet who fed his ideal on material possibilities. Three days before the arrival of Maria Louisa, Napoleon flung himself on his wedding bed at Compiègne. All stupendous passions have the same impulses. I love as a poet—as an emperor!'

"As I heard the last words, I believed that Comte Octave's fears were realized; he had risen, and was walking up and down, and gesticulating, but he stopped as if shocked by the vehemence of his own words.

"'I am very ridiculous,' he added, after a long pause, looking at me, as if craving a glance of pity.

"'No, Monsieur, you are very unhappy.'

"'Ah, yes!' said he, taking up the thread of his confidences. 'From the violence of my speech you may, you must believe in the intensity of a physical passion which for nine years has absorbed all my faculties; but that is nothing in comparison with the worship I feel for the soul, the mind, the heart, all in that woman that is not mere woman; the enchanting divinities in the train of Love, with whom we pass our life, and who form the daily poem of a fugitive delight. By a phenomenon of retrospection I see

now the graces of Honorine's mind and heart, to which I paid little heed in the time of my happiness—like all who are happy. From day to day I have appreciated the extent of my loss, discovering the exquisite gifts of that capricious and refractory young creature who has grown so strong and so proud under the heavy hand of poverty and the shock of the most cowardly desertion. And that heavenly blossom is fading in solitude and hiding!—Ah! The law of which we were speaking,' he went on with bitter irony, 'the law is a squad of gendarmes—my wife seized and dragged away by force! Would not that be to triumph over a corpse? Religion has no hold on her; she craves its poetry, she prays, but she does not listen to the commandments of the Church. I, for my part, have exhausted everything in the way of mercy, of kindness, of love; I am at my wits' end. Only one chance of victory is left to me: the cunning and patience with which bird-catchers at last entrap the wariest birds, the swiftest, the most capricious, and the rarest. Hence, Maurice, when M. de Granville's indiscretion betrayed to you the secret of my life, I ended by regarding this incident as one of the decrees of fate, one of the utterances for which gamblers listen and pray in the midst of their most impassioned play. . . . Have you enough affection for me to show me romantic devotion?'

"'I see what you are coming to, Monsieur le Comte,' said I, interrupting him; 'I guess your purpose. Your first secretary tried to open your deed box. I know the heart of your second—he might fall in love with your wife. And can you devote him to destruction by sending him into the fire? Can any one put his hand into a brazier without burning it?'

"'You are a foolish boy,' replied the Count. 'I will send you well gloved. It is no secretary of mine that will be lodged in the Rue Saint-Maur in the little garden-house which I have at his disposal. It is my distant cousin, Baron de l'Hostal, a lawyer high in office . . .'

"After a moment of silent surprise, I heard the gate bell

ring, and a carriage came into the courtyard. Presently the footman announced Madame de Courteville and her daughter. The Count had a large family connection on his mother's side. Madame de Courteville, his cousin, was the widow of a judge on the bench of the Seine division, who had left her a daughter and no fortune whatever. What could a woman of nine-and-twenty be in comparison with a young girl of twenty, as lovely as imagination could wish for an ideal mistress?

"'Baron, and Master of Appeals, till you get something better, and this old house settled on her—would not you have enough good reasons for not falling in love with the Countess?' he said to me in a whisper, as he took me by the hand and introduced me to Madame de Courteville and her daughter.

"I was dazzled, not so much by these advantages of which I had never dreamed, but by Amélie de Courteville, whose beauty was thrown into relief by one of those well-chosen toilets which a mother can achieve for a daughter when she wants to see her married.

"But I will not talk of myself," said the Consul after a pause.

"Three weeks later I went to live in the gardener's cottage, which had been cleaned, repaired, and furnished with the celerity which is explained by three words: Paris; French workmen; money! I was as much in love as the Count could possibly desire as a security. Would the prudence of a young man of five-and-twenty be equal to the part I was undertaking, involving a friend's happiness? To settle that matter, I may confess that I counted very much on my uncle's advice; for I had been authorized by the Count to take him into confidence in any case where I deemed his interference necessary. I engaged a garden; I devoted myself to horticulture; I worked frantically, like a man whom nothing can divert, turning up the soil of the market-garden, and appropriating the ground to the culture of flowers. Like the maniacs of England, or of Hol-

land, I gave it out that I was devoted to one kind of flower, and especially grew dahlias, collecting every variety. You will understand that my conduct, even in the smallest details, was laid down for me by the Count, whose whole intellectual powers were directed to the most trifling incidents of the tragi-comedy enacted in the Rue Saint-Maur. As soon as the Countess had gone to bed, at about eleven at night, Octave, Madame Gobain, and I sat in council. I heard the old woman's report to the Count of his wife's least proceedings during the day. He inquired into everything: her meals, her occupations, her frame of mind, her plans for the morrow, the flowers she proposed to imitate. I understood what love in despair may be when it is the threefold passion of the heart, the mind, and the senses. Octave lived only for that hour.

"During two months, while my work in the garden lasted, I never set eyes on the little house where my fair neighbor dwelt. I had not even inquired whether I had a neighbor, though the Countess's garden was divided from mine by a paling, along which she had planted cypress trees already four feet high. One fine morning Madame Gobain announced to her mistress, as a disastrous piece of news, the intention, expressed by an eccentric creature who had become her neighbor, of building a wall between the two gardens, at the end of the year. I will say nothing of the curiosity which consumed me to see the Countess! The wish almost extinguished my budding love for Amélie de Courteville. My scheme for building a wall was indeed a serious threat. There would be no more fresh air for Honorine, whose garden would then be a sort of narrow alley shut in between my wall and her own little house. This dwelling, formerly a summer villa, was like a house of cards; it was not more than thirty feet deep, and about a hundred feet long. The garden front, painted in the German fashion, imitated a trellis with flowers up to the second floor, and was a really charming example of the Pompadour style, so well called rococo. A long avenue of limes led up to it.

The gardens of the pavilion and my plot of ground were in the shape of a hatchet, of which this avenue was the handle. My wall would cut away three-quarters of the hatchet.

"The Countess was in despair.

"'My good Gobain,' said she, 'what sort of man is this florist?'

"'On my word,' said the housekeeper, 'I do not know whether it will be possible to tame him. He seems to have a horror of women. He is the nephew of a Paris curé. I have seen the uncle but once; a fine old man of sixty, very ugly, but very amiable. It is quite possible that this priest encourages his nephew, as they say in the neighborhood, in his love of flowers, that nothing worse may happen—'

"'Why—what?'

"'Well, your neighbor is a little cracked!' said Gobain, tapping her head!

"Now a harmless lunatic is the only man whom no woman ever distrusts in the matter of sentiment. You will see how wise the Count had been in choosing this disguise for me.

"'What ails him then?' asked the Countess.

"'He has studied too hard,' replied Gobain; 'he has turned misanthropic. And he has his reasons for disliking women—well, if you want to know all that is said about him—'

"'Well,' said Honorine, 'madmen frighten me less than sane folk; I will speak to him myself! Tell him that I beg him to come here. If I do not succeed, I will send for the curé.'

"The day after this conversation, as I was walking along my gravelled path, I caught sight of the half-opened curtains on the first floor of the little house, and of a woman's face curiously peeping out. Madame Gobain called me. I hastily glanced at the Countess's house, and by a rude shrug expressed, 'What do I care for your mistress!'

"'Madame,' said Gobain, called upon to give an account of her errand, 'the madman bid me leave him in peace, saying that even a charcoal seller is master in his own premises, especially when he has no wife.'

" 'He is perfectly right,' said the Countess.

" 'Yes, but he ended by saying, "I will go," when I told him that he would greatly distress a lady living in retirement, who found her greatest solace in growing flowers.'

"Next day a signal from Gobain informed me that I was expected. After the Countess's breakfast, when she was walking to and fro in front of her house, I broke out some palings, and went toward her. I had dressed myself like a countryman, in an old pair of gray flannel trousers, heavy wooden shoes, and shabby shooting coat, a peaked cap on my head, a ragged bandanna round my neck, hands soiled with mould, and a dibble in my hand.

" 'Madame,' said the housekeeper, 'this good man is your neighbor.'

"The Countess was not alarmed. I saw at last the woman whom her own conduct and her husband's confidences had made me so curious to meet. It was in the early days of May. The air was pure, the weather serene; the verdure of the first foliage, the fragrance of spring formed a setting for this creature of sorrow. As I then saw Honorine I understood Octave's passion and the truthfulness of his description, 'A heavenly flower!'

"Her pallor was what first struck me by its peculiar tone of white—for there are as many tones of white as of red or blue. On looking at the Countess, the eye seemed to feel that tender skin, where the blood flowed in the blue veins. At the slightest emotion the blood mounted under the surface in rosy flushes like a cloud. When we met, the sunshine, filtering through the light foliage of the acacias, shed on Honorine the pale gold, ambient glory in which Rafael and Titian, alone of all painters, have been able to enwrap the Virgin. Her brown eyes expressed both tenderness and vivacity; their brightness seemed reflected in her face through the long downcast lashes. Merely by lifting her delicate eyelids, Honorine could cast a spell; there was so much feeling, dignity, terror, or contempt in her way of raising or dropping those veils of the soul. She could freeze or give life by a

look. Her light-brown hair, carelessly knotted on her head, outlined a poet's brow, high, powerful, and dreamy. The mouth was wholly voluptuous. And to crown all by a grace, rare in France, though common in Italy, all the lines and forms of the head had a stamp of nobleness which would defy the outrages of time.

"Though slight, Honorine was not thin, and her figure struck me as being one that might revive love when it believed itself exhausted. She perfectly represented the idea conveyed by the word *mignonne;* she was one of those pliant little women who allow themselves to be taken up, petted, set down, and taken up again like a kitten. Her small feet, as I heard them on the gravel, made a light sound essentially their own, that harmonized with the rustle of her dress, producing a feminine music which stamped itself on the heart, and remained distinct from the footfall of a thousand other women. Her gait bore all the quarterings of her race with so much pride that, in the street, the least respectful workingman would have made way for her. Gay and tender, haughty and imposing, it was impossible to understand her, excepting as gifted with these apparently incompatible qualities, which, nevertheless, had left her still a child. But it was a child who might be as strong as an angel; and, like the angel, once hurt in her nature, she would be implacable.

"Coldness on that face must no doubt be death to those on whom her eyes had smiled, for whom her set lips had parted, for those whose soul had drunk in the melody of that voice, lending to her words the poetry of song by its peculiar intonation. Inhaling the perfume of violets that accompanied her, I understood how the memory of this wife had arrested the Count on the threshold of debauchery, and how impossible it would be ever to forget a creature who really was a flower to the touch, a flower to the eye, a flower of fragrance, a heavenly flower to the soul. . . . Honorine inspired devotion, chivalrous devotion, regardless of reward. A man on seeing her must say to himself:

" 'Think, and I will divine your thought; speak, and I

will obey. If my life, sacrificed in torments, can procure you one day's happiness, take my life; I will smile like a martyr at the stake, for I shall offer that day to God, as a token to which a father responds on recognizing a gift to his child.' Many women study their expression, and succeed in producing effects similar to those which would have struck you at first sight of the Countess; only, in her, it all was the outcome of a delightful nature, that inimitable nature went at once to the heart. If I tell you all this, it is because her soul, her thoughts, the exquisiteness of her heart, are all we are concerned with, and you would have blamed me if I had not sketched them for you.

"I was very near forgetting my part as a half-crazy lout, clumsy, and by no means chivalrous.

" 'I am told, Madame, that you are fond of flowers?'

" 'I am an artificial flower-maker,' said she. 'After growing flowers, I imitate them, like a mother who is artist enough to have the pleasure of painting portraits of her children. . . . That is enough to tell you that I am poor and unable to pay for the concession I am anxious to obtain from you.'

" 'But how,' said I, as grave as a judge, 'can a lady of such rank as yours would seem to be ply so humble a calling? Have you, like me, good reasons for employing your fingers so as to keep your brains from working?'

" 'Let us stick to the question of the wall,' said she, with a smile.

" 'Why, we have begun at the foundations,' said I. 'Must not I know which of us ought to yield to the other in behalf of our suffering, or, if you choose, of our mania?—Oh! what a charming clump of narcissus! They are as fresh as this spring morning!'

"I assure you, she had made for herself a perfect museum of flowers and shrubs, which none might see but the sun, and of which the arrangement had been prompted by the genius of an artist; the most heartless of landlords must have treated it with respect. The masses of plants, arranged according to

their height, or in single clumps, were really a joy to the soul. This retired and solitary garden breathed comforting scents, and suggested none but sweet thoughts and graceful, nay, voluptuous pictures. On it was set that inscrutable sign-manual, which our true character stamps on everything, as soon as nothing compels us to obey the various hypocrisies, necessary as they are, which Society insists on. I looked alternately at the mass of narcissus and at the Countess, affecting to be far more in love with the flowers than with her, to carry out my part.

"'So you are very fond of flowers?' said she.

"'They are,' I replied, 'the only beings that never disappoint our cares and affection.' And I went on to deliver such a diatribe while comparing botany and the world that we ended miles away from the dividing wall, and the Countess must have supposed me to be a wretched and wounded sufferer worthy of her pity. However, at the end of half an hour my neighbor naturally brought me back to the point; for women, when they are not in love, have all the cold blood of an experienced attorney.

"'If you insist on my leaving the paling,' said I, 'you will learn all the secrets of gardening that I want to hide; I am seeking to grow a blue dahlia, a blue rose; I am crazy for blue flowers. Is not blue the favorite color of superior souls? We are neither of us really at home; we might as well make a little door of open railings to unite our gardens. . . . You, too, are fond of flowers; you will see mine, I shall see yours. If you receive no visitors at all, I, for my part, have none but my uncle, the Curé of the White Friars.'

"'No,' said she, 'I will give you the right to come into my garden, my premises, at any hour. Come and welcome; you will always be admitted as a neighbor with whom I hope to keep on good terms. But I like my solitude too well to burden it with any loss of independence.'

"'As you please,' said I, and with one leap I was over the paling.

"'Now, of what use would a door be?' said I, from my

own domain, turning round to the Countess, and mocking her with a madman's gesture and grimace.

"For a fortnight I seemed to take no heed of my neighbor. Toward the end of May, one lovely evening, we happened both to be out on opposite sides of the paling, both walking slowly. Having reached the end, we could not help exchanging a few civil words; she found me in such deep dejection, lost in such painful meditations, that she spoke to me of hopefulness, in brief sentences that sounded like the songs with which nurses lull their babies. I then leaped the fence, and found myself for the second time at her side. The Countess led me into the house, wishing to subdue my sadness. So at last I had penetrated the sanctuary where everything was in harmony with the woman I have tried to describe to you.

"Exquisite simplicity reigned there. The interior of the little house was just such a dainty box as the art of the eighteenth century devised for the pretty profligacy of a fine gentleman. The dining-room, on the ground floor, was painted in fresco, with garlands of flowers, admirably and marvellously executed. The staircase was charmingly decorated in monochrome. The little drawing-room, opposite the dining-room, was very much faded; but the Countess had hung it with panels of tapestry of fanciful designs, taken off old screens. A bathroom came next. Upstairs there was but one bedroom, with a dressing-room, and a library which she used as her workroom. The kitchen was beneath in the basement on which the house was raised, for there was a flight of several steps outside. The balustrade of a balcony in garlands à la Pompadour concealed the roof; only the lead cornices were visible. In this retreat one was a hundred leagues from Paris.

"But for the bitter smile which occasionally played on the beautiful red lips of this pale woman, it would have been possible to believe that this violet buried in her thicket of flowers was happy. In a few days we had reached a certain degree of intimacy, the result of our close neighborhood and

of the Countess's conviction that I was indifferent to women. A look would have spoiled all, and I never allowed a thought of her to be seen in my eyes. Honorine chose to regard me as an old friend. Her manner to me was the outcome of a kind of pity. Her looks, her voice, her words, all showed that she was a hundred miles away from the coquettish airs which the strictest virtue might have allowed under such circumstances. She soon gave me the right to go into the pretty workshop where she made her flowers, a retreat full of books and curiosities, as smart as a boudoir where elegance emphasized the vulgarity of the tools of her trade. The Countess had in the course of time poetized, as I may say, a thing which is at the antipodes to poetry—a manufacture.

"Perhaps of all the work a woman can do, the making of artificial flowers is that of which the details allow her to display most grace. For coloring prints she must sit bent over a table and devote herself, with some attention, to this half painting. Embroidering tapestry, as diligently as a woman must who is to earn her living by it, entails consumption or curvature of the spine. Engraving music is one of the most laborious, by the care, the minute exactitude, and the intelligence it demands. Sewing and white embroidery do not earn thirty sous a day. But the making of flowers and light articles of wear necessitates a variety of movements, gestures, ideas even, which do not take a pretty woman out of her sphere; she is still herself; she may chat, laugh, sing, or think.

"There was certainly a feeling for art in the way in which the Countess arranged on a long deal table the myriad-colored petals which were used in composing the flowers she was to produce. The saucers of color were of white china, and always clean, arranged in such order that the eye could at once see the required shade in the scale of tints. Thus the aristocratic artist saved time. A pretty little cabinet with a hundred tiny drawers, of ebony inlaid with ivory, contained the little steel molds in which she shaped the leaves and some forms of petals. A fine Japanese bowl held the paste, which

was never allowed to turn sour, and it had a fitted cover with a hinge so easy that she could lift it with a finger-tip. The wire, of iron and brass, lurked in a little drawer of the table before her.

"Under her eyes, in a Venetian glass, shaped like a flower-cup on its stem, was the living model she strove to imitate. She had a passion for achievement; she attempted the most difficult things, close racemes, the tiniest corollas, heaths, nectaries of the most variegated hues. Her hands, as swift as her thoughts, went from the table to the flower she was making, as those of an accomplished pianist fly over the keys. Her fingers seemed to be fairies, to use Perrault's expression, so infinite were the different actions of twisting, fitting, and pressure needed for the work, all hidden under grace of movement, while she adapted each motion to the result with the lucidity of an instinct.

"I could not tire of admiring her as she shaped a flower from the materials sorted before her, padding the wire stem and adjusting the leaves. She displayed the genius of a painter in her bold attempts; she copied faded flowers and yellowing leaves; she struggled even with wildflowers, the most artless of all, and the most elaborate in their simplicity.

" 'This art,' she would say, 'is in its infancy. If the women of Paris had a little of the genius which the slavery of the harem brings out in Oriental women, they would lend a complete language of flowers to the wreaths they wear on their head. To please my own taste as an artist I have made drooping flowers with leaves of the hue of Florentine bronze, such as are found before or after the winter. Would not such a crown on the head of a young woman whose life is a failure have a certain poetical fitness? How many things a woman might express by her headdress! Are there not flowers for drunken Bacchantes, flowers for gloomy and stern bigots, pensive flowers for women who are bored? Botany, I believe, may be made to express every sensation and thought of the soul, even the most subtle!'

"She would employ me to stamp out the leaves, cut up material, and prepare wires for the stems. My affected desire for occupation made me soon skilful. We talked as we worked. When I had nothing to do, I read new books to her, for I had my part to keep up as a man weary of life, worn out with griefs, gloomy, sceptical, and soured. My person led to adorable banter as to my purely physical resemblance—with the exception of his club-foot—to Lord Byron. It was tacitly acknowledged that her own troubles, as to which she kept the most profound silence, far outweighed mine, though the causes I assigned for my misanthropy might have satisfied Young or Job.

"I will say nothing of the feelings of shame which tormented me as I inflicted on my heart, like the beggars in the street, false wounds to excite the compassion of that enchanting woman. I soon appreciated the extent of my devotedness by learning to estimate the baseness of a spy. The expressions of sympathy bestowed on me would have comforted the greatest grief. This charming creature, weaned from the world, and for so many years alone, having, besides love, treasures of kindliness to bestow, offered these to me with childlike effusiveness and such compassion as would inevitably have filled with bitterness any profligate who should have fallen in love with her; for, alas, it was all charity, all sheer pity. Her renunciation of love, her dread of what is called happiness for women, she proclaimed with equal vehemence and candor. These happy days proved to me that a woman's friendship is far superior to her love.

"I suffered the revelations of my sorrows to be dragged from me with as many grimaces as a young lady allows herself before sitting down to the piano, so conscious are they of the annoyance that will follow. As you may imagine, the necessity for overcoming my dislike to speak had induced the Countess to strengthen the bonds of our intimacy; but she found in me so exact a counterpart of her own antipathy to love, that I fancied she was well content

with the chance which had brought to her desert island a sort of Man Friday. Solitude was perhaps beginning to weigh on her. At the same time, there was nothing of the coquette in her; nothing survived of the woman; she did not feel that she had a heart, she told me, excepting in the ideal world where she found refuge. I involuntarily compared these two lives—hers and the Count's:—his, all activity, agitation, and emotion; hers, all inaction, quiescence, and stagnation. The woman and the man were admirably obedient to their nature. My misanthropy allowed me to utter cynical sallies against men and women both, and I indulged in them, hoping to bring Honorine to the confidential point; but she was not to be caught in any trap, and I began to understand that mulish obstinacy which is commoner among women than is generally supposed.

"'The Orientals are right,' I said to her one evening, 'when they shut you up and regard you merely as the playthings of their pleasure. Europe has been well punished for having admitted you to form an element of society and for accepting you on an equal footing. In my opinion, woman is the most dishonorable and cowardly being to be found. Nay, and that is where her charm lies. Where would be the pleasure of hunting a tame thing? When once a woman has inspired a man's passion, she is to him forever sacred; in his eyes she is hedged round by an imprescriptible prerogative. In men gratitude for past delights is eternal. Though he should find his mistress grown old or unworthy, the woman still has rights over his heart; but to you women the man you have loved is as nothing to you; nay, more, he is unpardonable in one thing—he lives on! You dare not own it, but you all have in your hearts the feeling which that popular calumny called tradition ascribes to the Lady of the Tour de Nesle: "What a pity it is that we cannot live on love as we live on fruit, and that when we have had our fill, nothing should survive but the remembrance of pleasure!"'

"'God has, no doubt, reserved such perfect bliss for Paradise,' said she. 'But,' she added, 'if your argument seems to you very witty, to me it has the disadvantage of being false. What can those women be who give themselves up to a succession of loves?' she asked, looking at me as the Virgin in Ingres' picture looks at Louis XIII. offering her his kingdom.

"'You are an actress in good faith,' said I, 'for you gave me a look just now which would make the fame of an actress. Still, lovely as you are, you have loved; *ergo*, you forget.'

"'I!' she exclaimed, evading my question, 'I am not a woman. I am a nun, and seventy-two years old!'

"'Then, how can you so positively assert that you feel more keenly than I? Sorrow has but one form for women. The only misfortunes they regard are disappointments of the heart.'

"She looked at me sweetly, and, like all women when stuck between the issues of a dilemma, or held in the clutches of truth, she persisted, nevertheless, in her wilfulness.

"'I am a nun,' she said, 'and you talk to me of a world where I shall never again set foot.'

"'Not even in thought?' said I.

"'Is the world so much to be desired?' she replied. 'Oh! when my mind wanders, it goes higher. The angel of perfection, the beautiful angel Gabriel, often sings in my heart. If I were rich, I should work, all the same, to keep me from soaring too often on the many-tinted wings of the angel, and wandering in the world of fancy. There are meditations which are the ruin of us women! I owe much peace of mind to my flowers, though sometimes they fail to occupy me. On some days I find my soul invaded by a purposeless expectancy; I cannot banish some idea which takes possession of me, which seems to make my fingers clumsy. I feel that some great event is impending, that my life is about to change; I listen vaguely, I stare into

the darkness, I have no liking for my work, and after a thousand fatigues I find life once more—every-day life. Is this a warning from heaven? I ask myself—'

"After three months of this struggle between two diplomats, concealed under the semblance of youthful melancholy, and a woman whose disgust of life made her invulnerable, I told the Count that it was impossible to drag this tortoise out of her shell; it must be broken. The evening before, in our last quite friendly discussion, the Countess had exclaimed:

" 'Lucretia's dagger wrote in letters of blood the watch-word of woman's charter: *Liberty!*'

"From that moment the Count left me free to act.

" 'I have been paid a hundred francs for the flowers and caps I made this week!' Honorine exclaimed gleefully one Saturday evening when I went to visit her in the little sitting-room on the ground floor, which the unavowed proprietor had had regilt.

"It was ten o'clock. The twilight of July and a glorious moon lent us their misty light. Gusts of mingled perfumes soothed the soul; the Countess was clinking in her hand the five gold pieces given to her by a supposititious dealer in fashionable frippery, another of Octave's accomplices found for him by a judge, M. Popinot.

" 'I earn my living by amusing myself,' said she; 'I am free, when men, armed with their laws, have tried to make us slaves. Oh, I have transports of pride every Saturday! In short, I like M. Gaudissart's gold pieces as much as Lord Byron, your double, liked Mr. Murray's.'

" 'This is not becoming in a woman,' said I.

" 'Pooh! Am I a woman? I am a boy gifted with a soft soul, that is all; a boy whom no woman can torture—'

" 'Your life is the negation of your whole being,' I replied. 'What? You, on whom God has lavished His choicest treasures of love and beauty, do you never wish—?'

" 'For what?' said she, somewhat disturbed by a speech

which, for the first time, gave the lie to the part I had assumed.

"'For a pretty little child with curling hair, running, playing among the flowers, like a flower itself of life and love, and calling you mother!'

"I waited for an answer. A too prolonged silence led me to perceive the terrible effect of my words, though the darkness at first concealed it. Leaning on her sofa, the Countess had not indeed fainted, but frozen under a nervous attack of which the first chill, as gentle as everything that was part of her, felt, as she afterward said, like the influence of a most insidious poison. I called Madame Gobain, who came and led away her mistress, laid her on her bed, unlaced her, undressed her, and restored her, not to life, it is true, but to the consciousness of some dreadful suffering. I meanwhile walked up and down the path behind the house, weeping, and doubting my success. I only wished to give up this part of the bird-catcher which I had so rashly assumed. Madame Gobain, who came down and found me with my face wet with tears, hastily went up again to say to the Countess:

"'What has happened, madame? Monsieur Maurice is crying like a child.'

"Roused to action by the evil interpretation that might be put on our mutual behavior, she summoned superhuman strength to put on a wrapper and come down to me.

"'You are not the cause of this attack,' said she. 'I am subject to these spasms, a sort of cramp of the heart—'

"'And you will not tell me of your troubles?' said I, in a voice which cannot be affected, as I wiped away my tears. 'Have you not just now told me that you have been a mother, and have been so unhappy as to lose your child?'

"'Marie!' she called as she rang the bell. Gobain came in.

"'Bring lights and some tea,' said she, with the calm decision of a Mylady clothed in the armor of pride by the dreadful English training which you know too well.

"When the housekeeper had lighted the tapers and closed the shutters, the Countess showed me a mute countenance; her indomitable pride and gravity, worthy of a savage, had already reasserted their mastery. She said:

" 'Do you know why I like Lord Byron so much? It is because he suffered as animals do. Of what use are complaints when they are not an elegy like Manfred's, nor bitter mockery like Don Juan's, nor a revery like Childe Harold's? Nothing shall be known of me. My heart is a poem that I lay before God.'

" ' If I chose—' said I.

" ' If?' she repeated.

" 'I have no interest in anything,' I replied, 'so I cannot be inquisitive; but, if I chose, I could know all your secrets by to-morrow.'

" ' I defy you!' she exclaimed, with ill-disguised uneasiness.

" 'Seriously?'

" 'Certainly,' said she, tossing her head. 'If such a crime is possible, I ought to know it.'

" 'In the first place, madame,' I went on, pointing to her hands, 'those pretty fingers, which are enough to show that you are not a mere girl—were they made for toil? Then you call yourself Madame Gobain, you, who, in my presence the other day on receiving a letter, said to Marie: "Here, this is for you!" Marie is the real Madame Gobain; so you conceal your name behind that of your housekeeper.—Fear nothing, madame, from me. You have in me the most devoted friend you will ever have: Friend, do you understand me? I give this word its sacred and pathetic meaning, so profaned in France, where we apply it to our enemies. And your friend, who will defend you against everything, only wishes that you should be as happy as such a woman ought to be. Who can tell whether the pain I have involuntarily caused you was not a voluntary act?'

"'Yes,' replied she with threatening audacity, 'I insist on it. Be curious, and tell me all that you can find out about me; but,' and she held up her finger, 'you must also tell me by what means you obtain your information. The preservation of the small happiness I enjoy here depends on the steps you take.'

"'That means that you will fly—'

"'On wings!' she cried, 'to the New World—'

"'Where you will be at the mercy of the brutal passions you will inspire,' said I, interrupting her. 'Is it not the very essence of genius and beauty to shine, to attract men's gaze, to excite desires and evil thoughts? Paris is a desert with Bedouins; Paris is the only place in the world where those who must work for their livelihood can hide their life. What have you to complain of? Who am I? An additional servant—M. Gobain, that is all. If you have to fight a duel, you may need a second.'

"'Never mind; find out who I am. I have already said that I insist. Now, I beg that you will,' she went on, with the grace which you ladies have at command," said the Consul, looking at the ladies.

"'Well, then, to-morrow, at the same hour, I will tell you what I may have discovered,' replied I. 'But do not therefore hate me! Will you behave like other women?'

"'What do other women do?'

"'They lay upon us immense sacrifices, and when we have made them, they reproach us for it some time later as if it were an injury.'

"'They are right if the thing required appears to be a sacrifice!' replied she pointedly.

"'Instead of sacrifices, say efforts and—'

"'It would be an impertinence,' said she.

"'Forgive me,' said I. 'I forgot that woman and the Pope are infallible.

"'Good heavens!' said she after a long pause, 'only two words would be enough to destroy the peace so dearly bought, and which I enjoy like a fraud—'

"She rose and paid no further heed to me.

"'Where can I go?' she said. 'What is to become of me?—Must I leave this quiet retreat that I had arranged with such care to end my days in?'

"'To end your days!' exclaimed I with visible alarm. 'Has it never struck you that a time would come when you could no longer work, when competition will lower the price of flowers and articles of fashion—?'

"'I have already saved a thousand crowns,' she said.

"'Heavens! what privations such a sum must represent!' I exclaimed.

"'Leave me,' said she, 'till to-morrow. This evening I am not myself; I must be alone. Must I not save my strength in case of disaster? For, if you should learn anything, others besides you would be informed, and then—Good-night,' she added shortly, dismissing me with an imperious gesture.

"'The battle is to-morrow, then,' I replied with a smile, to keep up the appearance of indifference I had given to the scene. But as I went down the avenue I repeated the words:

"'The battle is to-morrow.'

"Octave's anxiety was equal to Honorine's. The Count and I remained together till two in the morning, walking to and fro by the trenches of the Bastille, like two generals who, on the eve of a battle, calculate all the chances, examine the ground, and perceive that the victory must depend on an opportunity to be seized half-way through the fight. These two divided beings would each lie awake, one in the hope, the other in agonizing dread of reunion. The real dramas of life are not in circumstances, but in feelings; they are played in the heart, or, if you please, in that vast realm which we ought to call the Spiritual World. Octave and Honorine moved and lived altogether in the world of lofty spirits.

"I was punctual. At ten next evening I was, for the first time, shown into a charming bedroom furnished with white and blue—the nest of this wounded dove. The

Countess looked at me, and was about to speak, but was stricken dumb by my respectful demeanor.

"'Madame la Comtesse,' said I with a grave smile.

"The poor woman, who had risen, dropped back into her chair and remained there, sunk in an attitude of grief, which I should have liked to see perpetuated by a great painter.

"'You are,' I went on, 'the wife of the noblest and most highly respected of men; of a man who is acknowledged to be great, but who is far greater in his conduct to you than he is in the eyes of the world. You and he are two lofty natures.—Where do you suppose yourself to be living?' I asked her.

"'In my own house,' she replied, opening her eyes with a wide stare of astonishment.

"'In Count Octave's,' I replied. 'You have been tricked. M. Lenormand, the usher of the Court, is not the real owner; he is only a screen for your husband. The delightful seclusion you enjoy is the Count's work, the money you earn is paid by him, and his protection extends to the most trivial details of your existence. Your husband has saved you in the eyes of the world; he has assigned plausible reasons for your disappearance; he professes to hope that you were not lost in the wreck of the "Cécile," the ship in which you sailed for Havana to secure the fortune to be left to you by an old aunt, who might have forgotten you; you embarked, escorted by two ladies of her family and an old manservant. The Count says that he has sent agents to various spots, and received letters which give him great hopes. He takes as many precautions to hide you from all eyes as you take yourself. In short, he obeys you . . .'

"'That is enough,' she said. 'I want to know but one thing more. From whom have you obtained all these details?'

"'Well, madame, my uncle got a place for a penniless youth as secretary to the Commissary of Police in this part

of Paris. That young man told me everything. If you leave this house this evening, however stealthily, your husband will know where you are gone, and his care will follow you everywhere.—How could a woman so clever as you are believe that shopkeepers buy flowers and caps as dear as they sell them? Ask a thousand crowns for a bouquet, and you will get it. No mother's tenderness was ever more ingenious than your husband's! I have learned from the porter of this house that the Count often comes behind the fence when all are asleep, to see the glimmer of your night-light! Your large cashmere shawl cost six thousand francs —your old-clothes-seller brings you, as second hand, things fresh from the best makers. In short, you are living here like Venus in the toils of Vulcan; but you are alone in your prison by the devices of a sublime magnanimity, sublime for seven years past, and at every hour.'

"The Countess was trembling as a trapped swallow trembles while, as you hold it in your hand, it strains its neck to look about it with wild eyes. She shook with a nervous spasm, studying me with a defiant look. Her dry eyes glittered with a light that was almost hot: still, she was a woman! The moment came when her tears forced their way, and she wept—not because she was touched, but because she was helpless; they were tears of desperation. She had believed herself independent and free; marriage weighed on her as the prison cell does on the captive.

" 'I will go!' she cried through her tears. 'He forces me to it; I will go where no one certainly will come after me.'

" 'What,' I said, 'you would kill yourself?—Madame, you must have some powerful reasons for not wishing to return to Comte Octave.'

" 'Certainly I have!'

" 'Well, then, tell them to me; tell them to my uncle. In us you will find two devoted advisers. Though in the confessional my uncle is a priest, he never is one in a drawing-room. We will hear you; we will try to find a solution of the problems you may lay before us; and if you are the dupe or the victim of some misapprehension, perhaps we can

clear the matter up. Your soul, I believe, is pure; but if you have done wrong, your fault is fully expiated. . . . At any rate, remember that in me you have a most sincere friend. If you should wish to evade the Count's tyranny, I will find you the means; he shall never find you.'

"'Oh! there is always a convent!' said she.

"'Yes. But the Count, as Minister of State, can procure your rejection by every convent in the world. Even though he is powerful, I will save you from him—but—only when you have demonstrated to me that you cannot and ought not to return to him. Oh! do not fear that you would escape his power only to fall into mine,' I added, noticing a glance of horrible suspicion, full of exaggerated dignity. 'You shall have peace, solitude, and independence; in short, you shall be as free and as little annoyed as if you were an ugly, cross old maid. I myself would never be able to see you without your consent.'

"'And how? By what means?'

"'That is my secret. I am not deceiving you, of that you may be sure. Prove to me that this is the only life you can lead, that it is preferable to that of the Comtesse Octave, rich, admired, in one of the finest houses in Paris, beloved by her husband, a happy mother . . . and I will decide in your favor.'

"'But,' said she, 'will there never be a man who understands me?'

"'No. And that is why I appeal to religion to decide between us. The Curé of the White Friars is a saint, seventy-five years of age. My uncle is not a Grand Inquisitor, he is Saint John; but for you he will be Fénelon—the Fénelon who said to the Duc de Bourgogne: "Eat a calf on a Friday by all means, Monseigneur. But be a Christian." '

"'Nay, nay, monsieur, the convent is my last hope and my only refuge. There is none but God who can understand me. No man, not Saint Augustine himself, the tenderest of the Fathers of the Church, could enter into the scruples of my conscience, which are to me as the circles of Dante's hell, whence there is no escape. Another than my hus-

band, a different man, however unworthy of the offering, has had all my love. No, he has not had it, for he did not take it; I gave it him as a mother gives her child a wonderful toy, which it breaks. For me there never could be two loves. In some natures love can never be on trial; it is, or it is not. When it comes, when it rises up, it is complete. —Well, that life of eighteen months was to me a life of eighteen years; I threw into it all the faculties of my being, which were not impoverished by their effusiveness; they were exhausted by that delusive intimacy in which I alone was genuine. For me the cup of happiness is not drained, nor empty; and nothing can refill it, for it is broken. I am out of the fray; I have no weapons left. Having thus utterly abandoned myself, what am I?—the leavings of a feast. I had but one name bestowed on me, Honorine, as I had but one heart. My husband had the young girl, a worthless lover had the woman—there is nothing left!—Then let myself be loved! that is the great idea you mean to utter to me. Oh! but I still am something, and I rebel at the idea of being a prostitute! Yes, by the light of the conflagration I saw clearly; and I tell you—well, I could imagine surrendering to another man's love, but to Octave's? —No, never.'

"'Ah! you love him,' I said.

"'I esteem him, respect him, venerate him; he never has done me the smallest hurt; he is kind, he is tender; but I can never more love him. However,' she went on, 'let us talk no more of this. Discussion makes everything small. I will express my notions on this subject in writing to you, for at this moment they are suffocating me; I am feverish, my feet are standing in the ashes of my Paraclete. All that I see, these things which I believed I had earned by my labor, now remind me of everything I wish to forget. Ah! I must fly from hence as I fled from my home.'

"'Where will you go?' I asked. 'Can a woman exist unprotected? At thirty, in all the glory of your beauty, rich in powers of which you have no suspicion, full of ten-

derness to be bestowed, are you prepared to live in the wilderness where I could hide you?—Be quite easy. The Count, who for nine years has never allowed himself to be seen here, will never go there without your permission. You have his sublime devotion of nine years as a guarantee for your tranquillity. You may therefore discuss the future in perfect confidence with my uncle and me. My uncle has as much influence as a Minister of State. So compose yourself; do not exaggerate your misfortune. A priest whose hair has grown white in the exercise of his functions is not a boy; you will be understood by him to whom every passion has been confided for nearly fifty years now, and who weighs in his hands the ponderous heart of kings and princes. If he is stern under his stole, in the presence of your flowers he will be as tender as they are, and as indulgent as his Divine Master.'

"I left the Countess at midnight; she was apparently calm, but depressed, and had some secret purpose which no perspicacity could guess. I found the Count a few paces off, in the Rue Saint-Maur. Drawn by an irresistible attraction, he had quitted the spot on the Boulevards where we had agreed to meet.

" 'What a night my poor child will go through!' he exclaimed, when I had finished my account of the scene that had just taken place. 'Supposing I were to go to her!' he added; 'supposing she were to see me suddenly?'

" 'At this moment she is capable of throwing herself out of the window,' I replied. 'The Countess is one of those Lucretias who could not survive any violence, even if it were done by a man into whose arms she could throw herself.'

" 'You are young,' he answered; 'you do not know that in a soul tossed by such dreadful alternatives the will is like waters of a lake lashed by a tempest; the wind changes every instant, and the waves are driven now to one shore, now to the other. During this night the chances are quite as great that on seeing me Honorine might rush into my arms as that she should throw herself out of the window.'

"'And you would accept the equal chances,' said I.

"'Well, come,' said he, 'I have at home, to enable me to wait till to-morrow, a dose of opium which Desplein prepared for me to send me to sleep without any risk!'

"Next day at noon Gobain brought me a letter, telling me that the Countess had gone to bed at six, worn out with fatigue, and that, having taken a soothing draught prepared by the chemist, she had now fallen asleep.

"This is her letter, of which I kept a copy—for you, mademoiselle," said the Consul, addressing Camille, "know all the resources of art, the tricks of style, and the efforts made in their compositions by writers who do not lack skill; but you will acknowledge that literature could never find such language in its assumed pathos; there is nothing so terrible as truth. Here is the letter written by this woman, or rather by this anguish:

"'Monsieur Maurice—I know all your uncle could say to me; he is not better informed than my own conscience. Conscience is the interpreter of God to man. I know that if I am not reconciled to Octave, I shall be damned; that is the sentence of religious law. Civil law condemns me to obey, cost what it may. If my husband does not reject me, the world will regard me as pure, as virtuous, whatever I may have done. Yes, that much is sublime in marriage: society ratifies the husband's forgiveness; but it forgets that the forgiveness must be accepted. Legally, religiously, and from the world's point of view I ought to go back to Octave. Keeping only to the human aspect of the question, is it not cruel to refuse him happiness, to deprive him of children, to wipe his name out of the Golden Book and the list of peers? My sufferings, my repugnance, my feelings, all my egoism—for I know that I am an egoist—ought to be sacrificed to the family. I shall be a mother; the caresses of my child will wipe away many tears! I shall be very happy; I certainly shall be much looked up to. I shall ride, haughty and wealthy, in a handsome carriage! I shall have servants

and a fine house, and be the queen of as many parties as there are weeks in the year. The world will receive me handsomely. I shall not have to climb up again to the heaven of aristocracy, I shall never have come down from it. So God, the law, society are all in accord.

"'"What are you rebelling against?" I am asked from the height of heaven, from the pulpit, from the judge's bench, and from the throne, whose august intervention may at need be invoked by the Count. Your uncle, indeed, at need, would speak to me of a certain celestial grace which will flood my heart when I know the pleasure of doing my duty.

"'God, the law, the world, and Octave all wish me to live, no doubt. Well, if there is no other difficulty, my reply cuts the knot: I will not live. I will become quite white and innocent again; for I will lie in my shroud, white with the blameless pallor of death. This is not in the least "mulish obstinacy." That mulish obstinacy of which you jestingly accused me is in a woman the result of confidence, of a vision of the future. Though my husband, sublimely generous, may forget all, I shall not forget. Does forgetfulness depend on our will? When a widow remarries, love makes a girl of her; she marries a man she loves. But I cannot love the Count. It all lies in that, do not you see?

"'Every time my eyes met his I should see my sin in them, even when his were full of love. The greatness of his generosity would be the measure of the greatness of my crime. My eyes, always uneasy, would be forever reading an invisible condemnation. My heart would be full of confused and struggling memories; marriage can never move me to the cruel rapture, the mortal delirium of passion. I should kill my husband by my coldness, by comparisons which he would guess, though hidden in the depths of my conscience. Oh! on the day when I should read a trace of involuntary, even of suppressed reproach in a furrow on his brow, in a saddened look, in some imperceptible gesture, nothing could hold me: I should be lying with a fractured skull on the pavement, and find that less hard than my husband. It

might be my own over-susceptibility that would lead me to this horrible but welcome death; I might die the victim of an impatient mood in Octave caused by some matter of business, or be deceived by some unjust suspicion. Alas! I might even mistake some proof of love for a sign of contempt!

" 'What torture on both sides! Octave would be always doubting me, I doubting him. I, quite involuntarily, should give him a rival wholly unworthy of him, a man whom I despise, but with whom I have known raptures branded on me with fire, which are my shame, but which I cannot forget.

" 'Have I shown you enough of my heart? No one, monsieur, can convince me that love may be renewed, for I neither can nor will accept love from any one. A young bride is like a plucked flower; but a guilty wife is like a flower that had been walked over. You, who are a florist, you know whether it is ever possible to restore the broken stem, to revive the faded colors, to make the sap flow again in the tender vessels of which the whole vegetative function lies in their perfect rigidity. If some botanist should attempt the operation, could his genius smooth out the folds of the bruised corolla? If he could remake a flower, he would be God! God alone can remake me! I am drinking the bitter cup of expiation; but as I drink it I painfully spell out this sentence: Expiation is not annihilation.

" 'In my little house, alone, I eat my bread soaked in tears; but no one sees me eat nor sees me weep. If I go back to Octave, I must give up my tears—they would offend him. Oh! Monsieur, how many virtues must a woman tread underfoot, not to give herself, but to restore herself to a betrayed husband? Who could count them? God alone; for He alone can know and encourage the horrible refinements at which the angels must turn pale. Nay, I will go further. A woman has courage in the presence of her husband if he knows nothing; she shows a sort of fierce strength in her hypocrisy; she deceives him to secure him double happiness. But common knowledge is surely degrading.

Supposing I could exchange humiliation for ecstasy? Would not Octave at last feel that my consent was sheer depravity? Marriage is based on esteem, on sacrifices on both sides; but neither Octave nor I could esteem each other the day after our reunion. He would have disgraced me by a love like that of an old man for a courtesan, and I should forever feel the shame of being a chattel instead of a lady. I should represent pleasure, and not virtue, in his house. These are the bitter fruits of such a sin. I have made myself a bed where I can only toss on burning coals, a sleepless pillow.

"'Here, when I suffer, I bless my sufferings; I say to God, "I thank Thee!" But in my husband's house I should be full of terror, tasting joys to which I have no right.

"'All this, Monsieur, is not argument; it is the feeling of a soul made vast and hollow by seven years of suffering. Finally, must I make a horrible confession? I shall always feel at my bosom the lips of a child conceived in rapture and joy, and in the belief in happiness, of a child I nursed for seven months, that I shall bear in my womb all the days of my life. If other children should draw their nourishment from me, they would drink in tears mingling with the milk, and turning it sour. I seem a light thing, you regard me as a child—Ah, yes! I have a child's memory, the memory which returns to us on the verge of the tomb. So, you see, there is not a situation in that beautiful life to which the world and my husband's love want to recall me, which is not a false position, which does not cover a snare or reveal a precipice down which I must fall, torn by pitiless rocks. For five years now I have been wandering in the sandy desert of the future without finding a place convenient to repent in, because my soul is possessed by true repentance.

"'Religion has its answers ready to all this, and I know them by heart. This suffering, these difficulties, are my punishment she says and God will give me strength to endure them. This, Monsieur, is an argument to certain pious souls gifted with an energy which I have not. I have made my choice between this hell, where God does not forbid my

blessing Him, and the hell that awaits me under Count Octave's roof.

"'One word more. If I were still a girl, with the experience I now have, my husband is the man I should choose; but that is the very reason of my refusal. I could not bear to blush before that man. What! I should be always on my knees, he always standing upright; and if we were to exchange positions, I should scorn him! I will not be better treated by him in consequence of my sin. The angel who might venture under such circumstances on certain liberties which are permissible when both are equally blameless, is not on earth; he dwells in heaven! Octave is full of delicate feeling, I know; but even in his soul (which, however generous, is a man's soul after all) there is no guarantee for the new life I should lead with him.

"'Come, then, and tell me where I may find the solitude, the peace, the silence, so kindly to irreparable woes, which you promised me.'

"After making this copy of the letter to preserve it complete, I went to the Rue Payenne. Anxiety had conquered the power of opium. Octave was walking up and down his garden like a madman.

"'Answer that!' said I, giving him his wife's letter. 'Try to reassure the modesty of experience. It is rather more difficult than conquering the modesty of ignorance, which curiosity helps to betray.'

"'She is mine!' cried the Count, whose face expressed joy as he went on reading the letter.

"He signed to me with his hand to leave him to himself. I understood that extreme happiness and extreme pain obey the same laws: I went in to receive Madame de Courteville and Amélie, who were to dine with the Count that day. However handsome Mademoiselle de Courteville might be, I felt, on seeing her once more, that love has three aspects, and that the women who can inspire us with perfect love are very rare. As I involuntarily compared Amélie with Hono-

rine, I found the erring wife more attractive than the pure girl. To Honorine's heart fidelity had not been a duty, but the inevitable; while Amélie would serenely pronounce the most solemn promises without knowing their purport or to what they bound her. The crushed, the dead woman, so to speak, the sinner to be reinstated, seemed to me sublime; she incited the special generosities of a man's nature; she demanded all the treasures of the heart, all the resources of strength; she filled his life and gave the zest of a conflict to happiness; whereas Amélie, chaste and confiding, would settle down into the sphere of peaceful motherhood, where the commonplace must be its poetry, and where my mind would find no struggle and no victory.

"Of the plains of Champagne and the snowy, storm-beaten but sublime Alps, what young man would choose the chalky, monotonous level? No; such comparisons are fatal and wrong on the threshold of the Mairie. Alas! only the experience of life can teach us that marriage excludes passion, that a family cannot have its foundation on the tempests of love. After having dreamed of impossible love, with its infinite caprices, after having tasted the tormenting delights of the ideal, I saw before me modest reality. Pity me, for what could be expected! At five-and-twenty I did not trust myself; but I took a manful resolution.

"I went back to the Count to announce the arrival of his relations, and I saw him grown young again in the reflected light of hope.

"'What ails you, Maurice?' said he, struck by my changed expression.

"'Monsieur le Comte—'

"'No longer Octave? You, to whom I shall owe my life, my happiness—'

"'My dear Octave, if you should succeed in bringing the Countess back to her duty, I have studied her well' —(he looked at me as Othello must have looked at Iago when Iago first contrived to insinuate a suspicion into the Moor's mind)—'she must never see me again; she must

never know that Maurice was your secretary. Never mention my name to her, or all will be undone. . . . You have got me an appointment as Maître des Requêtes—well, get me instead some diplomatic post abroad, a consulship, and do not think of my marrying Amélie.—Oh! do not be uneasy,' I added, seeing him draw himself up, 'I will play my part to the end.'

"'Poor boy!' said he, taking my hand, which he pressed, while he kept back the tears that were starting to his eyes.

"'You gave me gloves,' I said, laughing, 'but I have not put them on; that is all.'

"We then agreed as to what I was to do that evening at Honorine's house, whither I presently returned. It was now August; the day had been hot and stormy, but the storm hung overhead, the sky was like copper; the scent of the flowers was heavy, I felt as if I were in an oven, and caught myself wishing that the Countess might have set out for the Indies; but she was sitting on a wooden bench shaped like a sofa, under an arbor, in a loose dress of white muslin fastened with blue bows, her hair unadorned in waving bands over her cheeks, her feet on a small wooden stool, and showing a little way beyond her skirt. She did not rise; she showed me with her hand to the seat by her side, saying: 'Now, is not life at a deadlock for me?'

"'Life as you have made it,' I replied. 'But not the life I propose to make for you; for, if you choose, you may be very happy. . . .'

"'How?' said she; her whole person was a question.

"'Your letter is in the Count's hands.'

"Honorine started like a frightened doe, sprang to a few paces off, walked down the garden, turned about, remained standing for some minutes, and finally went in to sit alone in the drawing-room, where I joined her, after giving her time to get accustomed to the pain of this poniard thrust.

"'You—a friend? Say rather a traitor! A spy, perhaps, sent by my husband.'

"Instinct in women is as strong as the perspicacity of great men.

"'You wanted an answer to your letter, did not you? And there was but one man in the world who could write it. You must read the reply, my dear Countess; and if after reading it you still find that your life is a deadlock, the spy will prove himself a friend; I will place you in a convent whence the Count's power cannot drag you. But, before going there, let us consider the other side of the question. There is a law, alike divine and human, which even hatred affects to obey, and which commands us not to condemn the accused without hearing his defence. Till now you have passed condemnation, as children do, with your ears stopped. The devotion of seven years has its claims. So you must read the answer your husband will send you. I have forwarded to him, through my uncle, a copy of your letter, and my uncle asked him what his reply would be if his wife wrote him a letter in such terms. Thus you are not compromised. He will himself bring the Count's answer. In the presence of that saintly man, and in mine, out of respect for your own dignity, you must read it, or you will be no better than a wilful, passionate child. You must make this sacrifice to the world, to the law, and to God.'

"As she saw in this concession no attack on her womanly resolve, she consented. All the labor of four or five months had been building up to this moment. But do not the Pyramids end in a point on which a bird may perch? The Count had set all his hopes on this supreme instant, and he had reached it.

"In all my life I remember nothing more formidable than my uncle's entrance into that little Pompadour drawing-room, at ten that evening. The fine head, with its silver hair thrown into relief by the entirely black dress, and the divinely calm face, had a magical effect on the Comtesse Honorine; she had the feeling of cool balm on her wounds, and beamed in the reflection of that virtue

which gave light without knowing it. 'Monsieur the Curé of the White Friars,' said old Gobain.

"'Are you come, uncle, with a message of happiness and peace?' said I.

"'Happiness and peace are always to be found in obedience to the precepts of the Church,' replied my uncle, and he handed the Countess the following letter:

"'My dear Honorine—If you had but done me the favor of trusting me, if you had read the letter I wrote to you five years since, you would have spared yourself five years of useless labor, and of privations which have grieved me deeply. In it I proposed an arrangement of which the stipulations will relieve all your fears, and make our domestic life possible. I have much to reproach myself with, and in seven years of sorrow I have discovered all my errors. I misunderstood marriage. I failed to scent danger when it threatened you. An angel was in my house. The Lord bid me guard it well! The Lord has punished me for my audacious confidence.

"'You cannot give yourself a single lash without striking me. Have mercy on me, my dear Honorine. I so fully appreciated your susceptibilities that I would not bring you back to the old house in the Rue Payenne, where I can live without you, but which I could not bear to see again with you. I am decorating, with great pleasure, another house, in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, to which, in hope, I conduct not a wife whom I owe to her ignorance of life, and secured to me by law, but a sister who will allow me to press on her brow such a kiss as a father gives the daughter he blesses every day.

"'Will you bereave me of the right I have conquered from your despair—that of watching more closely over your needs, your pleasures, your life even? Women have one heart always on their side, always abounding in excuses—their mother's; you never knew any mother but my mother, who would have brought you back to me. But how is it

that you never guessed that I had for you the heart of a mother, both of my mother and of your own? Yes, dear, my affection is neither mean nor grasping; it is one of those which will never let any annoyance last long enough to pucker the brow of the child it worships. What can you think of the companion of your childhood, Honorine, if you believe him capable of accepting kisses given in trembling, of living between delight and anxiety? Do not fear that you will be exposed to the laments of a suppliant passion; I would not want you back until I felt certain of my own strength to leave you in perfect freedom.

"'Your solitary pride has exaggerated the difficulties. You may, if you will, look on at the life of a brother, or of a father, without either suffering or joy; but you will find neither mockery nor indifference, nor have any doubt as to his intentions. The warmth of the atmosphere in which you live will be always equable and genial, without tempests, without a possible squall. If, later, when you feel secure that you are as much at home as in your own little house, you desire to try some other elements of happiness, pleasures, or amusements, you can expand their circle at your will. The tenderness of a mother knows neither contempt nor pity. What is it? Love without desire. Well, in me admiration shall hide every sentiment in which you might see an offence.

"'Thus, living side by side, we may both be magnanimous. In you the kindness of a sister, the affectionate thoughtfulness of a friend, will satisfy the ambition of him who wishes to be your life's companion; and you may measure his tenderness by the care he will take to conceal it. Neither you nor I will be jealous of the past, for we may each acknowledge that the other has sense enough to look only straight forward.

"'Thus you will be at home in your new house exactly as you are in the Rue Saint-Maur; unapproachable, alone, occupied as you please, living by your own law; but having in addition the legitimate protection, of which you are

now exacting the most chivalrous labors of love, with the consideration which lends so much lustre to a woman, and the fortune which will allow of your doing many good works. Honorine, when you long for an unnecessary absolution, you have only to ask for it; it will not be forced upon you by the Church or by the Law; it will wait on your pride, on your own impulsion. My wife might indeed have to fear all the things you dread; but not my friend and sister, toward whom I am bound to show every form and refinement of politeness. To see you happy is enough happiness for me; I have proved this for these seven years past. The guarantee for this, Honorine, is to be seen in all the flowers made by you, carefully preserved, and watered by my tears. Like the *quipos*, the tally-cords of the Peruvians, they are the record of our sorrows.

" 'If this secret compact does not suit you, my child, I have begged the saintly man who takes charge of this letter not to say a word in my behalf. I will not owe your return to the terrors threatened by the Church, nor to the bidding of the Law. I will not accept the simple and quiet happiness that I ask from any one but yourself. If you persist in condemning me to the lonely life, bereft even of a fraternal smile, which I have led for nine years, if you remain in your solitude and show no sign, my will yields to yours. Understand me perfectly: you shall be no more troubled than you have been until this day. I will get rid of the crazy fellow who has meddled in your concerns, and has perhaps caused you some annoyance. . . .'

" 'Monsieur,' said Honorine, folding up the letter, which she placed in her bosom, and looking at my uncle, 'thank you very much. I will avail myself of Monsieur le Comte's permission to remain here—'

" 'Ah!' I exclaimed.

"This exclamation made my uncle look at me uneasily, and won from the Countess a mischievous glance, which enlightened me as to her motives.

"Honorine had wanted to ascertain whether I were an actor, a bird snarer; and I had the melancholy satisfaction of deceiving her by my exclamation, which was one of those cries from the heart which women understand so well.

" 'Ah, Maurice,' said she, 'you know how to love.'

"The light that flashed in my eyes was another reply which would have dissipated the Countess's uneasiness if she still had any. Thus the Count found me useful to the very last.

"Honorine then took out the Count's letter again to finish reading it. My uncle signed to me, and I rose.

" 'Let us leave the Countess,' said he.

" 'You are going already, Maurice?' she said, without looking at me.

"She rose, and still reading, followed us to the door. On the threshold she took my hand, pressed it very affectionately, and said, 'We shall meet again . . .'

" 'No,' I replied, wringing her hand, so that she cried out. 'You love your husband. I leave to-morrow.'

"And I rushed away, leaving my uncle, to whom she said: 'Why, what is the matter with your nephew?'

"The good Abbé completed my work by pointing to his head and heart, as much as to say, 'He is mad, madame; you must forgive him!' and with all the more truth because he really thought it.

"Six days after, I set out with an appointment as vice-consul in Spain, in a large commercial town, where I could quickly qualify to rise in the career of a consul, to which I now restricted my ambition. After I had established myself there, I received this letter from the Count:

" 'My dear Maurice—If I were happy, I should not write to you, but I have entered on a new life of suffering. I have grown young again in my desires, with all the impatience of a man of forty, and the prudence of a diplomatist, who has learned to moderate his passion. When

you left I had not yet been admitted to the *pavillon* in the Rue Saint-Maur, but a letter had promised me that I should have permission—the mild and melancholy letter of a woman who dreaded the agitations of a meeting. After waiting for more than a month, I made bold to call, and desired Gobain to inquire whether I could be received. I sat down in a chair in the avenue near the lodge, my head buried in my hands, and there I remained for almost an hour.

" ' "Madame had to dress," said Gobain, to hide Honorine's hesitancy under a pride of appearance which was flattering to me.

" 'During a long quarter of an hour we both of us were possessed by an involuntary nervous trembling as great as that which seizes a speaker on the platform, and we spoke to each other in sacred phrases, like those of persons taken by surprise who "make believe" a conversation.

" ' "You see, Honorine," said I, my eyes full of tears, "the ice is broken, and I am so tremulous with happiness that you must forgive the incoherency of my language. It will be so for a long time yet."

" ' "There is no crime in being in love with your wife," said she with a forced smile.

" ' "Do me the favor," said I, "no longer to work as you do. I have heard from Madame Gobain that for three weeks you have been living on your savings; you have sixty thousand francs a year of your own, and if you cannot give me back your heart, at least do not abandon your fortune to me."

" ' "I have long known your kindness," said she.

" ' "Though you should prefer to remain here," said I, "and to preserve your independence; though the most ardent love should find no favor in your eyes, still, do not toil."

" 'I gave her three certificates for twelve thousand francs a year each; she took them, opened them languidly, and after reading them through she gave me only a look as my

reward. She fully understood that I was not offering her money, but freedom.

"'"I am conquered," said she, holding out her hand, which I kissed. "Come and see me as often as you like."

"'So she had done herself a violence in receiving me. Next day I found her armed with affected high spirits, and it took two months of habit before I saw her in her true character. But then it was like a delicious May, a spring-time of love that gave me ineffable bliss; she was no longer afraid; she was studying me. Alas! when I proposed that she should go to England to return ostensibly to me, to our home, that she should resume her rank and live in our new residence, she was seized with alarm.

"'"Why not live always as we are?" she said.

"'I submitted without saying a word.

"'"Is she making an experiment?" I asked myself as I left her. On my way from my own house to the Rue Saint-Maur thoughts of love had swelled in my heart, and I had said to myself, like a young man, "This evening she will yield."

"'All my real or affected force was blown to the winds by a smile, by a command from those proud, calm eyes, untouched by passion. I remembered the terrible words you once quoted to me, "Lucretia's dagger wrote in letters of blood the watchword of woman's charter—Liberty!" and they froze me. I felt imperatively how necessary to me was Honorine's consent, and how impossible it was to wring it from her. Could she guess the storms that distracted me when I left as when I came?

"'At last I painted my situation in a letter to her, giving up the attempt to speak of it. Honorine made no answer, and she was so sad that I made as though I had not written. I was deeply grieved by the idea that I could have distressed her; she read my heart and forgave me. And this was how. Three days ago she received me, for the first time, in her own blue-and-white room. It was bright with flowers, dressed, and lighted up. Honorine was in a dress that made her be-

witching. Her hair framed that face that you know in its light curls; and in it were some sprays of Cape heath; she wore a white muslin gown, a white sash with long floating ends. You know what she is in such simplicity, but that day she was a bride, the Honorine of long past days. My joy was chilled at once, for her face was terribly grave; there were fires beneath the ice.

"'"Octave," she said, "I will return as your wife when you will. But understand clearly that this submission has its dangers. I can be resigned—"

"'I made a movement.

"'"Yes," she went on, "I understand: resignation offends you, and you want what I cannot give—Love. Religion and pity led me to renounce my vow of solitude; you are here!" She paused.

"'"At first," she went on, "you asked no more. Now you demand your wife. Well, here I give you Honorine, such as she is, without deceiving you as to what she will be.—What shall I be? A mother? I hope it. Believe me, I hope it eagerly. Try to change me; you have my consent; but if I should die, my dear, do not curse my memory, and do not set down to obstinacy what I should call the worship of the Ideal, if it were not more natural to call the indefinable feeling which must kill me the worship of the Divine! The future will be nothing to me; it will be your concern; consult your own mind."

"'And she sat down in the calm attitude you used to admire, and watched me turning pale with the pain she had inflicted. My blood ran cold. On seeing the effect of her words she took both my hands, and, holding them in her own, she said:

"'"Octave, I do love you, but not in the way you wish to be loved. I love your soul. . . . Still, understand that I love you enough to die in your service like an Eastern slave, and without a regret. It will be my expiation."

"'She did more; she knelt before me on a cushion, and in a spirit of sublime charity she said:

"'"And perhaps I shall not die!"

"'For two months now I have been struggling with myself. What shall I do? My heart is too full; I therefore seek a friend, and send out this cry, "What shall I do?"'

"I did not answer this letter. Two months later the newspapers announced the return on board an English vessel of the Comtesse Octave, restored to her family after adventures by land and sea, invented with sufficient probability to arouse no contradiction.

"When I moved to Genoa I received a formal announcement of the happy event of the birth of a son to the Count and Countess. I held that letter in my hand for two hours, sitting on this terrace—on this bench. Two months after, urged by Octave, by M. de Granville, and Monsieur de Sérizy, my kind friends, and broken by the death of my uncle, I agreed to take a wife.

"Six months after the revolution of July I received this letter, which concludes the story of this couple:

"'Monsieur Maurice—I am dying though I am a mother—perhaps because I am a mother. I have played my part as a wife well; I have deceived my husband. I have had happiness not less genuine than the tears shed by actresses on the stage. I am dying for society, for the family, for marriage, as the early Christians died for God! I know not of what I am dying, and I am honestly trying to find out, for I am not perverse; but I am bent on explaining my malady to you—you who brought that heavenly physician your uncle, at whose word I surrendered. He was my director; I nursed him in his last illness, and he showed me the way to heaven, bidding me persevere in my duty.

"'And I have done my duty.

"'I do not blame those who forget. I admire them as strong and necessary natures; but I have the malady of memory! I have not been able twice to feel that love of the heart which identifies a woman with the man she

loves. To the last moment, as you know, I cried to your heart, in the confessional, and to my husband, "Have mercy!" But there was no mercy. Well, and I am dying, dying with stupendous courage. No courtesan was ever more gay than I. My poor Octave is happy; I let his love feed on the illusions of my heart. I throw all my powers into this terrible masquerade; the actress is applauded, feasted, smothered in flowers; but the invisible rival comes every day to seek its prey—a fragment of my life. I am rent and I smile. I smile on two children, but it is the elder, the dead one, that will triumph! I told you so before. The dead child calls me, and I am going to him.

"'The intimacy of marriage without love is a position in which my soul feels degraded every hour. I can never weep or give myself up to dreams but when I am alone. The exigencies of society, the care of my child, and that of Octave's happiness never leave me a moment to refresh myself, to renew my strength, as I could in my solitude. The incessant need for watchfulness startles my heart with constant alarms. I have not succeeded in implanting in my soul the sharp-eared vigilance that lies with facility, and has the eyes of a lynx. It is not the lip of one I love that drinks my tears and kisses my eyelids; it is a handkerchief that dries them; my burning eyes are cooled with water, and not with tender lips. It is my soul that acts a part, and that perhaps is why I am dying! I lock up my grief with so much care that nothing is to be seen of it; it must eat into something, and it has attacked my life.

"'I said to the doctors, who discovered my secret, "Make me die of some plausible complaint, or I shall drag my husband with me."

"'So it is quite understood by MM. Desplein, Bianchon, and myself that I am dying of the softening of some bone which science has fully described. Octave believes that I adore him, do you understand? So I am afraid lest he should follow me. I now write to beg you in that case to be the little Count's guardian. You will find with this

a codicil in which I have expressed my wish; but do not produce it excepting in case of need, for perhaps I am fatuously vain. My devotion may perhaps leave Octave inconsolable but willing to live.—Poor Octave! I wish him a better wife than I am, for he deserves to be well loved.

"'Since my spiritual spy is married, I bid him remember what the florist of the Rue Saint-Maur hereby bequeaths to him as a lesson: May your wife soon be a mother! Fling her into the vulgarest materialism of household life; hinder her from cherishing in her heart the mysterious flower of the Ideal—of that heavenly perfection in which I believed, that enchanted blossom with glorious colors, and whose perfume disgusts us with reality. I am a Saint-Theresa who has not been suffered to live on ecstasy in the depths of a convent, with the Holy Infant, and a spotless winged angel to come and go as she wished.

"'You saw me happy among my beloved flowers. I did not tell you all: I saw love budding under your affected madness, and I concealed from you my thoughts, my poetry; I did not admit you to my kingdom of beauty. Well, well; you will love my child for love of me if he should one day lose his poor father. Keep my secrets as the grave will keep them. Do not mourn for me; I have been dead this many a day, if Saint Bernard was right in saying that where there is no more love there is no more life.'"

"And the Countess died," said the Consul, putting away the letters and locking the pocket-book.

"Is the Count still living?" asked the Ambassador, "for since the revolution of July he has disappeared from the political stage."

"Do you remember, Monsieur de Lora," said the Consul-General, "having seen me going to the steamboat with—"

"A white-haired man! an old man?" said the painter.

"An old man of forty-five, going in search of health and amusement in Southern Italy. That old man was my poor

friend, my patron, passing through Genoa to take leave of me and place his will in my hands. He appoints me his son's guardian. I had no occasion to tell him of Honorine's wishes."

"Does he suspect himself of murder?" said Mademoiselle des Touches to the Baron de l'Hostal.

"He suspects the truth," replied the Consul, "and that is what is killing him. I remained on board the steam packet that was to take him to Naples till it was out of the roadstead; a small boat brought me back. We sat for some little time taking leave of each other—forever, I fear. God only knows how much we love the confidant of our love when she who inspired it is no more.

" 'That man,' said Octave, 'holds a charm and wears an aureole.' The Count went to the prow and looked down on the Mediterranean. It happened to be fine, and, moved no doubt by the spectacle, he spoke these last words: 'Ought we not, in the interests of human nature, to inquire what is the irresistible power which leads us to sacrifice an exquisite creature to the most fugitive of all pleasures, and in spite of our reason? In my conscience I heard cries. Honorine was not alone in her anguish. And yet I would have it! . . . I am consumed by remorse. In the Rue Payenne I was dying of the joys I had not; now I shall die in Italy of the joys I have had. . . . Wherein lay the discord between two natures, equally noble, I dare assert?' "

For some minutes profound silence reigned on the terrace.

Then the Consul, turning to the two women, asked, "Was she virtuous?"

Mademoiselle des Touches rose, took the Consul's arm, went a few steps away, and said to him:

"Are not men wrong too when they come to us and make a young girl a wife while cherishing at the bottom of their heart some angelic image, and comparing us to those unknown rivals, to perfections often borrowed from a remembrance, and always finding us wanting?"

"Mademoiselle, you would be right if marriage were based

on passion; and that was the mistake of those two, who will soon be no more. Marriage with heart-deep love on both sides would be Paradise."

Mademoiselle des Touches turned from the Consul, and was immediately joined by Claude Vignon, who said in her ear: "A bit of a coxcomb is M. de l'Hostal."

"No," replied she, whispering to Claude these words: "for he has not yet guessed that Honorine would have loved him.—Oh!" she exclaimed, seeing the Consul's wife approaching, "his wife was listening! Unhappy man!"

Eleven was striking by all the clocks, and the guests went home on foot along the seashore.

"Still, that is not life," said Mademoiselle des Touches. "That woman was one of the rarest and perhaps the most extraordinary exceptions in intellect—a pearl! Life is made up of various incidents, of pain and pleasure alternately. The Paradise of Dante, that sublime expression of the ideal, that perpetual blue, is to be found only in the soul; to ask it of the facts of life is a luxury against which nature protests every hour. To such souls as those the six feet of a cell and the kneeling chair are all they need."

"You are right," said Léon de Lora; "but good-for-nothing as I may be, I cannot help admiring a woman who is capable, as that one was, of living by the side of a studio, under a painter's roof, and never coming down, nor seeing the world, nor dipping her feet in the street mud."

"Such a thing has been known—for a few months," said Claude Vignon, with deep irony.

"Comtesse Honorine is not unique of her kind," replied the Ambassador to Mademoiselle des Touches. "A man, nay, and a politician, a bitter writer, was the object of such a passion; and the pistol shot which killed him hit not him alone; the woman who loved lived like a nun ever after."

"Then there are yet some great souls in this age!" said Camille Maupin, and she stood for some minutes pensively leaning on the balustrade of the quay.

PARIS, *January, 1843.*

# COLONEL CHABERT

*To Madame la Comtesse Ida de Bocarmé* née *du Chasteler*

*HULLO!* There is that old Box-coat again!" This exclamation was made by a lawyer's clerk of the class called in French offices a gutter-jumper —a messenger in fact—who at this moment was eating a piece of dry bread with a hearty appetite. He pulled off a morsel of crumb to make into a bullet, and fired it gleefully through the open pane of the window against which he was leaning. The pellet, well aimed, rebounded almost as high as the window, after hitting the hat of a stranger who was crossing the courtyard of a house in the Rue Vivienne, where dwelt Maître Derville, attorney-at-law.

"Come, Simonnin, don't play tricks on people, or I will turn you out of doors. However poor a client may be, he is still a man, hang it all!" said the head clerk, pausing in the addition of a bill of costs.

The lawyer's messenger is commonly, as was Simonnin, a lad of thirteen or fourteen, who, in every office, is under the special jurisdiction of the managing clerk, whose errands and *billets-doux* keep him employed on his way to carry writs to the bailiffs and petitions to the Courts. He is akin to the street boy in his habits, and to the pettifogger by fate. The boy is almost always ruthless, unbroken, unmanageable, a ribald rhymester, impudent, greedy, and idle. And yet, almost all these clerklings have an old mother lodging on some fifth floor with whom they share their pittance of thirty or forty francs a month.

"If he is a man, why do you call him old Box-coat?"

asked Simonnin, with the air of a schoolboy who has caught out his master.

And he went on eating his bread and cheese, leaning his shoulder against the window jamb; for he rested standing like a cab-horse, one of his legs raised and propped against the other, on the toe of his shoe.

"What trick can we play that cove?" said the third clerk, whose name was Godeschal, in a low voice, pausing in the middle of a discourse he was extemporizing in an appeal engrossed by the fourth clerk, of which copies were being made by two neophytes from the provinces.

Then he went on improvising:

"*But, in his noble and beneficent wisdom, his Majesty, Louis the Eighteenth*—(write it at full length, heh! Desroches the learned—you, as you engross it!)—*when he resumed the reins of Government, understood*—(what did that old nincompoop ever understand?)—*the high mission to which he had been called by Divine Providence!*—(a note of admiration and six stops. They are pious enough at the Courts to let us put six)—*and his first thought, as is proved by the date of the order hereinafter designated, was to repair the misfortunes caused by the terrible and sad disasters of the revolutionary times, by restoring to his numerous and faithful adherents*—('numerous' is flattering, and ought to please the Bench)—*all their unsold estates, whether within our realm, or in conquered or acquired territory, or in the endowments of public institutions, for we are, and proclaim ourselves competent to declare that this is the spirit and meaning of the famous, truly loyal order given in*— Stop," said Godeschal to the three copying clerks, "that rascally sentence brings me to the end of my page.—Well," he went on, wetting the back fold of the sheet with his tongue, so as to be able to fold back the page of thick stamped paper, "well, if you want to play him a trick, tell him that the master can only see his clients between two and three in the morning; we shall see if he comes, the old ruffian!"

And Godeschal took up the sentence he was dictating—"*given in*—Are you ready?"

"Yes," cried the three writers.

It all went on together, the appeal, the gossip, and the conspiracy.

"*Given in*—Here, Daddy Boucard, what is the date of the order? We must dot our *i*'s and cross our *t*'s, by Jingo! It helps to fill the pages."

"By Jingo!" repeated one of the copying clerks before Boucard, the head clerk, could reply.

"What! have you written *by Jingo?*" cried Godeschal, looking at one of the novices, with an expression at once stern and humorous.

"Why, yes," said Desroches, the fourth clerk, leaning across his neighbor's copy, "he has written, '*We must dot our* i's' and spelled it *by Gingo!*"

All the clerks shouted with laughter.

"Why! Monsieur Huré, you take 'By Jingo' for a law term, and you say you come from Mortagne!" exclaimed Simonnin.

"Scratch it cleanly out," said the head clerk. "If the judge, whose business it is to tax the bill, were to see such things, he would say you were laughing at the whole boiling. You would hear of it from the chief! Come, no more of this nonsense, Monsieur Huré! A Norman ought not to write out an appeal without thought. It is the 'Shoulder arms!' of the law."

"*Given in—in?*" asked Godeschal.—"Tell me when, Boucard."

"June, 1814," replied the head clerk, without looking up from his work.

A knock at the office door interrupted the circumlocutions of the prolix document. Five clerks with rows of hungry teeth, bright, mocking eyes, and curly heads, lifted their noses toward the door, after crying all together in a singing tone, "Come in!"

Boucard kept his face buried in a pile of papers—*broutilles* (odds and ends) in French law jargon—and went on drawing out the bill of costs on which he was busy.

The office was a large room furnished with the traditional stool which is to be seen in all these dens of law-quibbling. The stove pipe crossed the room diagonally to the chimney of a bricked-up fireplace; on the marble chimney-piece were several chunks of bread, triangles of Brie cheese, pork cutlets, glasses, bottles, and the head clerk's cup of chocolate. The smell of these dainties blended so completely with that of the immoderately overheated stove and the odor peculiar to offices and old papers that the trail of a fox would not have been perceptible. The floor was covered with mud and snow, brought in by the clerks. Near the window stood the desk with a revolving lid, where the head clerk worked, and against the back of it was the second clerk's table. The second clerk was at this moment in Court. It was between eight and nine in the morning.

The only decoration of the office consisted in huge yellow posters, announcing seizures of real estate, sales, settlements under trust, final or interim judgments—all the glory of a lawyer's office. Behind the head clerk was an enormous stack of pigeon-holes from the top to the bottom of the room, of which each division was crammed with bundles of papers with an infinite number of tickets hanging from them at the ends of red tape, which give a peculiar physiognomy to law-papers. The lower rows were filled with cardboard boxes, yellow with use, on which might be read the names of the more important clients whose cases were juicily stewing at this present time. The dirty window-panes admitted but little daylight. Indeed, there are very few offices in Paris where it is possible to write without lamplight before ten in the morning in the month of February, for they are all left to very natural neglect; every one comes and no one stays; no one has any personal interest in a scene of mere routine—neither the attorney, nor the counsel, nor the clerks, trouble themselves about the appearance of a place which, to the youths, is a schoolroom; to the clients, a passage; to the chief, a laboratory. The greasy furniture is handed down to successive owners with such scrupulous care that in some offices

may still be seen boxes of *remainders*, machines for twisting parchment gut, and bags left by the prosecuting parties of the Chatelet (abbreviated to *Chlet*)—a Court which, under the old order of things, represented the present Court of First Instance (or County Court).

So in this dark office, thick with dust, there was, as in all its fellows, something repulsive to the clients—something which made it one of the most hideous monstrosities of Paris. Nay, were it not for the mouldy sacristies where prayers are weighed out and paid for like groceries and for the old-clothes shops, where flutter the rags that blight all the illusions of life by showing us the last end of all our festivities—an attorney's office would be, of all social marts, the most loathsome. But we might say the same of the gambling-hell, of the Law Court, of the lottery office, of the brothel.

But why? In these places, perhaps, the drama being played in a man's soul makes him indifferent to accessories, which would also account for the single-mindedness of great thinkers and men of great ambitions.

"Where is my penknife?"

"I am eating my breakfast."

"You go and be hanged! here is a blot on the copy."

"Silence, gentlemen!"

These various exclamations were uttered simultaneously at the moment when the old client shut the door with the sort of humility which disfigures the movements of a man down on his luck. The stranger tried to smile, but the muscles of his face relaxed as he vainly looked for some symptoms of amenity on the inexorably indifferent faces of the six clerks. Accustomed, no doubt, to gauge men, he very politely addressed the gutter-jumper, hoping to get a civil answer from this boy of all work.

"Monsieur, is your master at home?"

The pert messenger made no reply, but patted his ear with the fingers of his left hand, as much as to say, "I am deaf."

"What do you want, sir?" asked Godeschal, swallowing

as he spoke a mouthful of bread big enough to charge a four-pounder, flourishing his knife and crossing his legs, throwing up one foot in the air to the level of his eyes.

"This is the fifth time I have called," replied the victim. "I wish to speak to M. Derville."

"On business?"

"Yes, but I can explain it to no one but—"

"M. Derville is in bed; if you want to consult him on some difficulty, he does no serious work till midnight. But if you will lay the case before us, we could help you just as well as he can to—"

The stranger was unmoved; he looked timidly about him, like a dog who has got into a strange kitchen and expects a kick. By grace of their profession, lawyers' clerks have no fear of thieves; they did not suspect the owner of the box-coat, and left him to study the place, where he looked in vain for a chair to sit on, for he was evidently tired. Attorneys, on principle, do not have many chairs in their offices. The inferior client, being kept waiting on his feet, goes away grumbling, but then he does not waste time, which, as an old lawyer once said, is not allowed for when the bill is taxed.

"Monsieur," said the old man, "as I have already told you, I cannot explain my business to any one but M. Derville. I will wait till he is up."

Boucard had finished his bill. He smelled the fragrance of his chocolate, rose from his cane armchair, went to the chimney-piece, looked the old man from head to foot, stared at his coat, and made an indescribable grimace. He probably reflected that whichever way this client might be wrung, it would be impossible to squeeze out a centime, so he put in a few brief words to rid the office of a bad customer.

"It is the truth, monsieur. The chief only works at night. If your business is important, I recommend you to return at one in the morning." The stranger looked at the head clerk with a bewildered expression, and remained motionless for a moment. The clerks, accustomed to every change of countenance, and the odd whimsicalities

to which indecision or absence of mind gives rise in "parties," went on eating, making as much noise with their jaws as horses over a manger, and paying no further heed to the old man.

"I will come again to-night," said the stranger at length, with the tenacious desire, peculiar to the unfortunate, to catch humanity at fault.

The only irony allowed to poverty is to drive Justice and Benevolence to unjust denials. When a poor wretch has convicted Society of falsehood, he throws himself more eagerly on the mercy of God.

"What do you think of that for a cracked pot?" said Simonnin, without waiting till the old man had shut the door.

"He looks as if he had been buried and dug up again," said a clerk.

"He is some Colonel who wants his arrears of pay," said the head clerk.

"No, he is a retired concierge," said Godeschal.

"I bet you he is a nobleman," cried Boucard.

"I bet you he has been a porter," retorted Godeschal. "Only porters are gifted by nature with shabby box-coats, as worn and greasy and frayed as that old body's. And did you see his trodden-down boots that let the water in, and his stock which serves for a shirt? He has slept in a dry arch."

"He may be of noble birth, and yet have pulled the door-latch," cried Desroches. "It has been known!"

"No," Boucard insisted, in the midst of laughter, "I maintain that he was a brewer in 1789, and a Colonel in the time of the Republic."

"I bet theatre tickets round that he never was a soldier," said Godeschal.

"Done with you," answered Boucard.

"Monsieur! Monsieur!" shouted the little messenger, opening the window.

"What are you at now, Simonnin?" asked Boucard.

"I am calling him that you may ask him whether he is a Colonel or a porter; he must know."

All the clerks laughed. As to the old man, he was already coming upstairs again.

"What can we say to him?" cried Godeschal.

"Leave it to me," replied Boucard.

The poor man came in nervously, his eyes cast down, perhaps not to betray how hungry he was by looking too greedily at the eatables.

"Monsieur," said Boucard, "will you have the kindness to leave your name, so that M. Derville may know—"

"Chabert."

"The Colonel who was killed at Eylau?" asked Huré, who, having so far said nothing, was jealous of adding a jest to all the others.

"The same, Monsieur," replied the good man, with antique simplicity. And he went away.

"Whew!"

"Done brown!"

"Poof!"

"Oh!"

"Ah!"

"Boum!"

"The old rogue!"

"Ting-a-ring-ting!"

"Sold again!"

"Monsieur Desroches, you are going to the play without paying," said Huré to the fourth clerk, giving him a slap on the shoulder that might have killed a rhinoceros.

There was a storm of cat-calls, cries, and exclamations, which all the onomatopeia of the language would fail to represent.

"Which theatre shall we go to?"

"To the opera," cried the head clerk.

"In the first place," said Godeschal, "I never mentioned which theatre. I might, if I chose, take you to see Madame Saqui."

"Madame Saqui is not the play."

"What is a play?" replied Godeschal. "First, we must define the point of fact. What did I bet, gentlemen? A play. What is a play? A spectacle. What is a spectacle? Something to be seen—"

"But on that principle you would pay your bet by taking us to see the water run under the Pont Neuf!" cried Simonnin, interrupting him.

"To be seen for money," Godeschal added.

"But a great many things are to be seen for money that are not plays. The definition is defective," said Desroches.

"But do listen to me!"

"You are talking nonsense, my dear boy," said Boucard.

"Is Curtius' a play?" said Godeschal.

"No," said the head clerk, "it is a collection of figures—but it is a spectacle."

"I bet you a hundred francs to a sou," Godeschal resumed, "that Curtius' Waxworks forms such a show as might be called a play or theatre. It contains a thing to be seen at various prices, according to the place you choose to occupy."

"And so on, and so forth!" said Simonnin.

"You mind I don't box your ears!" said Godeschal.

The clerks shrugged their shoulders.

"Besides, it is not proved that that old ape was not making game of us," he said, dropping his argument, which was drowned in the laughter of the other clerks. "On my honor, Colonel Chabert is really and truly dead. His wife is married again to Comte Ferraud, Councillor of State. Madame Ferraud is one of our clients."

"Come, the case is remanded till to-morrow," said Boucard. "To work, gentlemen. The deuce is in it; we get nothing done here. Finish copying that appeal; it must be handed in before the sitting of the Fourth Chamber, judgment is to be given to-day. Come, on you go!"

"If he really were Colonel Chabert, would not that im-

pudent rascal Simonnin have felt the leather of his boot in the right place when he pretended to be deaf?" said Desroches, regarding this remark as more conclusive than Godeschal's.

"Since nothing is settled," said Boucard, "let us all agree to go to the upper boxes of the Français and see Talma in 'Nero.' Simonnin may go to the pit."

And thereupon the head clerk sat down at his table, and the others followed his example.

"*Given in June eighteen hundred and fourteen* (in words)," said Godeschal. "Ready?"

"Yes," replied the two copying clerks and the engrosser, whose pens forthwith began to creak over the stamped paper, making as much noise in the office as a hundred cockchafers imprisoned by schoolboys in paper cages.

"*And we hope that my lords on the Bench*," the extemporizing clerk went on. "Stop! I must read my sentence through again. I do not understand it myself."

"Forty-six (that must often happen) and three forty-nines," said Boucard.

"*We hope*," Godeschal began again, after reading all through the document, "*that my lords on the Bench will not be less magnanimous than the august author of the decree, and that they will do justice against the miserable claims of the acting committee of the chief Board of the Legion of Honor by interpreting the law in the wide sense we have here set forth—*"

"Monsieur Godeschal, wouldn't you like a glass of water?" said the little messenger.

"That imp of a boy!" said Boucard. "Here, get on your double-soled shank's mare, take this packet, and spin off to the Invalides."

"*Here set forth*," Godeschal went on. "Add *in the interest of Madame la Vicomtesse* (at full length) *de Grandlieu.*"

"What!" cried the chief, "are you thinking of drawing up an appeal in the case of Vicomtesse de Grandlieu against the Legion of Honor—a case for the office to stand or fall by? You are something like an ass! Have the goodness

to put aside your copies and your notes; you may keep all that for the case of Navarreins against the Hospitals. It is late; I will draw up a little petition myself, with a due allowance of 'inasmuch,' and go to the Courts myself."

This scene is typical of the thousand delights which, when we look back on our youth, make us say, "Those were good times."

At about one in the morning Colonel Chabert, self-styled, knocked at the door of Maître Derville, attorney to the Court of First Instance in the Department of the Seine. The porter told him that Monsieur Derville had not yet come in. The old man said he had an appointment, and was shown upstairs to the rooms occupied by the famous lawyer, who, notwithstanding his youth, was considered to have one of the longest heads in Paris.

Having rung, the distrustful applicant was not a little astonished at finding the head clerk busily arranging in a convenient order on his master's dining-room table the papers relating to the cases to be tried on the morrow. The clerk, not less astonished, bowed to the Colonel and begged him to take a seat, which the client did.

"On my word, Monsieur, I thought you were joking yesterday when you named such an hour for an interview," said the old man, with the forced mirth of a ruined man, who does his best to smile.

"The clerks were joking, but they were speaking the truth too," replied the man, going on with his work. "M. Derville chooses this hour for studying his cases, taking stock of their possibilities, arranging how to conduct them, deciding on the line of defence. His prodigious intellect is freer at this hour—the only time when he can have the silence and quiet needed for the conception of good ideas. Since he entered the profession, you are the third person to come to him for a consultation at this midnight hour. After coming in, the chief will discuss each case, read everything, spend four or five hours perhaps over the

business, then he will ring for me and explain to me his intentions. In the morning from ten till two he hears what his clients have to say, then he spends the rest of his day in appointments. In the evening he goes into society to keep up his connections. So he has only the night for undermining his cases, ransacking the arsenal of the Code, and laying his plan of battle. He is determined never to lose a case; he loves his art. He will not undertake every case, as his brethren do. That is his life, an exceptionally active one. And he makes a great deal of money."

As he listened to this explanation, the old man sat silent, and his strange face assumed an expression so bereft of intelligence, that the clerk, after looking at him, thought no more about him.

A few minutes later Derville came in, in evening dress; his head clerk opened the door to him, and went back to finish arranging the papers. The young lawyer paused for a moment in amazement on seeing in the dim light the strange client who awaited him. Colonel Chabert was as absolutely immovable as one of the wax figures in Curtius' collection to which Godeschal had proposed to treat his fellow-clerks. This quiescence would not have been a subject for astonishment if it had not completed the supernatural aspect of the man's whole person. The old soldier was dry and lean. His forehead, intentionally hidden under a smoothly combed wig, gave him a look of mystery. His eyes seemed shrouded in a transparent film; you would have compared them to dingy mother-of-pearl with a blue iridescence changing in the gleam of the wax-lights. His face, pale, livid, and as thin as a knife, if I may use such a vulgar expression, was as the face of the dead. Round his neck was a tight black silk stock.

Below the dark line of this rag the body was so completely hidden in shadow that a man of imagination might have supposed the old head was due to some chance play of light and shade, or have taken it for a portrait by Rem-

brandt, without a frame. The brim of the hat which covered the old man's brow cast a black line of shadow on the upper part of the face. This grotesque effect, though natural, threw into relief by contrast the white furrows, the cold wrinkles, the colorless tone of the corpse-like countenance. And the absence of all movement in the figure, of all fire in the eye, were in harmony with a certain look of melancholy madness, and the deteriorating symptoms characteristic of senility, giving the face an indescribably ill-starred look which no human words could render.

But an observer, especially a lawyer, could also have read in this stricken man the signs of deep sorrow, the traces of grief which had worn into this face, as drops of water from the sky falling on fine marble at last destroy its beauty. A physician, an author, or a judge might have discerned a whole drama at the sight of its sublime horror, while the least charm was its resemblance to the grotesques which artists amuse themselves by sketching on a corner of the lithographic stone while chatting with a friend.

On seeing the attorney, the stranger started, with the convulsive thrill that comes over a poet when a sudden noise rouses him from a fruitful revery in silence and at night. The old man hastily removed his hat and rose to bow to the young man; the leather lining of his hat was doubtless very greasy; his wig stuck to it without his noticing it, and left his head bare, showing his skull horribly disfigured by a scar beginning at the nape of the neck and ending over the right eye, a prominent seam all across his head. The sudden removal of the dirty wig which the poor man wore to hide this gash gave the two lawyers no inclination to laugh, so horrible to behold was this riven skull. The first idea suggested by the sight of this old wound was, "His intelligence must have escaped through that cut."

"If this is not Colonel Chabert, he is some thoroughgoing trooper!" thought Boucard.

"Monsieur," said Derville, "to whom have I the honor of speaking?"

"To Colonel Chabert."

"Which?"

"He who was killed at Eylau," replied the old man.

On hearing this strange speech, the lawyer and his clerk glanced at each other, as much as to say, "He is mad."

"Monsieur," the Colonel went on, "I wish to confide to you the secret of my position."

A thing well worthy of note is the natural intrepidity of lawyers. Whether from the habit of receiving a great many persons, or from the deep sense of the protection conferred on them by the law, or from confidence in their mission, they enter everywhere, fearing nothing, like priests and physicians. Derville signed to Boucard, who vanished.

"During the day, sir," said the attorney, "I am not so miserly of my time, but at night every minute is precious. So be brief and concise. Go to the facts without digression. I will ask for any explanations I may consider necessary. Speak."

Having bid his strange client to be seated, the young man sat down at the table; but while he gave his attention to the deceased Colonel, he turned over the bundles of papers.

"You know, perhaps," said the dead man, "that I commanded a cavalry regiment at Eylau. I was of important service to the success of Murat's famous charge which decided the victory. Unhappily for me, my death is a historical fact, recorded in 'Victoires et Conquêtes,' where it is related in full detail. We cut through the three Russian lines, which at once closed up and formed again, so that we had to repeat the movement back again. At the moment when we were nearing the Emperor, after having scattered the Russians, I came against a squadron of the enemy's cavalry. I rushed at the obstinate brutes. Two Russian officers, perfect giants, attacked me both at once. One of them gave me a cut across the head that crashed through everything, even a black silk cap I wore next my head, and cut deep into the skull. I fell from my horse. Murat came up

to support me; he rode over my body, he and all his men, fifteen hundred of them—there might have been more! My death was announced to the Emperor, who as a precaution —for he was fond of me, was the Master—wished to know if there were no hope of saving the man he had to thank for such a vigorous attack. He sent two surgeons to identify me and bring me into hospital, saying, perhaps too carelessly, for he was very busy, 'Go and see whether by any chance poor Chabert is still alive.' These rascally sawbones, who had just seen me lying under the hoofs of the horses of two regiments, no doubt did not trouble themselves to feel my pulse, and reported that I was quite dead. The certificate of death was probably made out in accordance with the rules of military jurisprudence."

As he heard his visitor express himself with complete lucidity, and relate a story so probable though so strange, the young lawyer ceased fingering the papers, rested his left elbow on the table, and with his head on his hand looked steadily at the Colonel.

"Do you know, Monsieur, that I am lawyer to the Comtesse Ferraud," he said, interrupting the speaker, "Colonel Chabert's widow?"

"My wife—yes, Monsieur. Therefore, after a hundred fruitless attempts to interest lawyers, who have all thought me mad, I made up my mind to come to you. I will tell you of my misfortunes afterward; for the present, allow me to prove the facts, explaining rather how things must have fallen out rather than how they did occur. Certain circumstances, known, I suppose, to no one but the Almighty, compel me to speak of some things as hypothetical. The wounds I had received must presumably have produced tetanus, or have thrown me into a state analogous to that of a disease called, I believe, catalepsy. Otherwise how is it conceivable that I should have been stripped, as is the custom in time of war, and thrown into the common grave by the men ordered to bury the dead?

"Allow me here to refer to a detail of which I could know

nothing till after the event, which, after all, I must speak of as my death. At Stuttgart, in 1814, I met an old quartermaster of my regiment. This dear fellow, the only man who chose to recognize me, and of whom I will tell you more later, explained the marvel of my preservation, by telling me that my horse was shot in the flank at the moment when I was wounded. Man and beast went down together, like a monk cut out of card-paper. As I fell, to the right or to the left, I was no doubt covered by the body of my horse, which protected me from being trampled to death or hit by a ball.

"When I came to myself, Monsieur, I was in a position and an atmosphere of which I could give you no idea if I talked till to-morrow. The little air there was to breathe was foul. I wanted to move, and found no room. I opened my eyes, and saw nothing. The most alarming circumstance was the lack of air, and this enlightened me as to my situation. I understood that no fresh air could penetrate to me, and that I must die. This thought took off the sense of intolerable pain which had aroused me. There was a violent singing in my ears. I heard—or I thought I heard, I will assert nothing—groans from the world of dead among whom I was lying. Some nights I still think I hear those stifled moans; though the remembrance of that time is very obscure, and my memory very indistinct, in spite of my impressions of far more acute suffering I was fated to go through, and which have confused my ideas.

"But there was something more awful than cries; there was a silence such as I have never known elsewhere—literally, the silence of the grave. At last, by raising my hands and feeling the dead, I discerned a vacant space between my head and the human carrion above. I could thus measure the space, granted by a chance of which I knew not the cause. It would seem that, thanks to the carelessness and the haste with which we had been pitched into the trench, two dead bodies had leaned across and against each other, forming an angle like that made by two

cards when a child is building a card castle. Feeling about me at once, for there was no time for play, I happily felt an arm lying detached, the arm of a Hercules! A stout bone, to which I owed my rescue. But for this unhoped-for help, I must have perished. But with a fury you may imagine, I began to work my way through the bodies which separated me from the layer of earth which had no doubt been thrown over us—I say us, as if there had been others living! I worked with a will, Monsieur, for here I am! But to this day I do not know how I succeeded in getting through the pile of flesh which formed a barrier between me and life. You will say I had three arms. This crowbar, which I used cleverly enough, opened out a little air between the bodies I moved, and I economized my breath. At last I saw daylight, but through snow!

"At that moment I perceived that my head was cut open. Happily my blood, or that of my comrades, or perhaps the torn skin of my horse, who knows, had in coagulating formed a sort of natural plaster. But, in spite of it, I fainted away when my head came into contact with the snow. However, the little warmth left in me melted the snow about me; and when I recovered consciousness, I found myself in the middle of a round hole, where I stood shouting as long as I could. But the sun was rising, so I had very little chance of being heard. Was there any one in the fields yet? I pulled myself up, using my feet as a spring, resting on one of the dead, whose ribs were firm. You may suppose that this was not the moment for saying, 'Respect courage in misfortune!' In short, Monsieur, after enduring the anguish, if the word is strong enough for my frenzy, of seeing for a long time, yes, quite a long time, those cursed Germans flying from a voice they heard where they could see no one, I was dug out by a woman, who was brave or curious enough to come close to my head, which must have looked as though it had sprouted from the ground like a mushroom. This woman went to fetch her husband, and between them they got me to their poor hovel.

"It would seem that I must have again fallen into a catalepsy—allow me to use the word to describe a state of which I have no idea, but which, from the account given by my hosts, I suppose to have been the effect of that malady. I remained for six months between life and death; not speaking, or, if I spoke, talking in delirium. At last, my hosts got me admitted to the hospital at Heilsberg.

"You will understand, Monsieur, that I came out of the womb of the grave as naked as I came from my mother's; so that six months afterward, when I remembered, one fine morning, that I had been Colonel Chabert, and when, on recovering my wits, I tried to exact from my nurse rather more respect than she paid to any poor devil, all my companions in the ward began to laugh. Luckily for me, the surgeon, out of professional pride, had answered for my cure, and was naturally interested in his patient. When I told him coherently about my former life, this good man, named Sparchmann, signed a deposition, drawn up in the legal form of his country, giving an account of the miraculous way in which I had escaped from the trench dug for the dead, the day and hour when I had been found by my benefactress and her husband, the nature and exact spot of my injuries, adding to these documents a description of my person.

"Well, Monsieur, I have neither these important pieces of evidence, nor the declaration I made before a notary at Heilsberg, with a view to establishing my identity. From the day when I was turned out of that town by the events of war, I have wandered about like a vagabond, begging my bread, treated as a madman when I have told my story, without ever having found or earned a sou to enable me to recover the deeds which would prove my statements, and restore me to society. My sufferings have often kept me for six months at a time in some little town, where every care was taken of the invalid Frenchman, but where he was laughed at to his face as soon as he said he was Colonel Chabert. For a long time that laughter, those doubts, used

to put me into rages which did me harm, and which even led to my being locked up at Stuttgart as a madman. And, indeed, as you may judge from my story, there was ample reason for shutting a man up.

"At the end of two years' detention, which I was compelled to submit to, after hearing my keepers say a thousand times, 'Here is a poor man who thinks he is Colonel Chabert' to people who would reply, 'Poor fellow!' I became convinced of the impossibility of my own adventure. I grew melancholy, resigned, and quiet, and gave up calling myself Colonel Chabert, in order to get out of my prison, and see France once more. Oh, Monsieur! To see Paris again was a delirium which I—"

Without finishing his sentence, Colonel Chabert fell into a deep study, which Derville respected.

"One fine day," his visitor resumed, "one spring day, they gave me the key of the fields, as we say, and ten thalers, admitting that I talked quite sensibly on all subjects, and no longer called myself Colonel Chabert. On my honor, at that time, and even to this day, sometimes I hate my name. I wish I were not myself. The sense of my rights kills me. If my illness had but deprived me of all memory of my past life I could be happy. I should have entered the service again under any name, no matter what, and should, perhaps, have been made Field-Marshal in Austria or Russia. Who knows?"

"Monsieur," said the attorney, "you have upset all my ideas. I feel as if I heard you in a dream. Pause for a moment, I beg of you."

"You are the only person," said the Colonel, with a melancholy look, "who ever listened to me so patiently. No lawyer has been willing to loan me ten napoleons to enable me to procure from Germany the necessary documents to begin my lawsuit—"

"What lawsuit?" said the attorney, who had forgotten his client's painful position in listening to the narrative of his past sufferings.

"Why, Monsieur, is not the Comtesse Ferraud my wife? She has thirty thousand francs a year, which belong to me, and she will not give me a sou. When I tell lawyers these things—men of sense; when I propose—I, a beggar—to bring an action against a Count and Countess; when I—a dead man—bring up as against a certificate of death a certificate of marriage and registers of births, they show me out, either with the air of cold politeness, which you all know how to assume to rid yourselves of a hapless wretch, or brutally, like men who think they have to deal with a swindler or a madman—it depends on their nature. I have been buried under the dead; but now I am buried under the living, under papers, under facts, under the whole of society, which wants to shove me underground again!"

"Pray resume your narrative," said Derville.

"'Pray resume it!'" cried the hapless old man, taking the young lawyer's hand. "That is the first polite word I have heard since—"

The Colonel wept. Gratitude choked his voice. The appealing and unutterable eloquence that lies in the eyes, in a gesture, even in silence, entirely convinced Derville, and touched him deeply.

"Listen, Monsieur," said he; "I have this evening won three hundred francs at cards. I may very well lay out half that sum in making a man happy. I will begin the inquiries and researches necessary to obtain the documents of which you speak, and until they arrive I will give you five francs a day. If you are Colonel Chabert, you will pardon the smallness of the loan as coming from a young man who has his fortune to make. Proceed."

The Colonel, as he called himself, sat for a moment motionless and bewildered; the depth of his woes had no doubt destroyed his powers of belief. Though he was eager in pursuit of his military distinction, of his fortune, of himself, perhaps it was in obedience to the inexplicable feeling, the latent germ in every man's heart, to which we owe the experiments of alchemists, the passion for glory, the discoveries

of astronomy and of physics, everything which prompts man to expand his being by multiplying himself through deeds or ideas. In his mind the *Ego* was now but a secondary object, just as the vanity of success or the pleasure of winning become dearer to the gambler than the object he has at stake. The young lawyer's words were as a miracle to this man, for ten years repudiated by his wife, by justice, by the whole social creation. To find in a lawyer's office the ten gold pieces which had so long been refused him by so many people, and in so many ways! The Colonel was like the lady who, having been ill of a fever for fifteen years, fancied she had some fresh complaint when she was cured. There are joys in which we have ceased to believe; they fall on us, it is like a thunderbolt; they burn us. The poor man's gratitude was too great to find utterance. To superficial observers he seemed cold, but Derville saw complete honesty under this amazement. A swindler would have found his voice.

"Where was I?" said the Colonel, with the simplicity of a child or of a soldier, for there is often something of the child in a true soldier, and almost always something of the soldier in a child, especially in France.

"At Stuttgart. You were out of prison," said Derville.

"You know my wife?" asked the Colonel.

"Yes," said Derville, with a bow.

"What is she like?"

"Still quite charming."

The old man held up his hand, and seemed to be swallowing down some secret anguish with the grave and solemn resignation that is characteristic of men who have stood the ordeal of blood and fire on the battlefield.

"Monsieur," said he, with a sort of cheerfulness—for he breathed again, the poor Colonel; he had again risen from the grave; he had just melted a covering of snow less easily thawed than that which had once before frozen his head; and he drew a deep breath, as if he had just escaped from a dungeon—"Monsieur, if I had been a handsome young fellow, none of my misfortunes would have befallen me. Women

believe in men when they flavor their speeches with the word Love. They hurry then, they come, they go, they are everywhere at once; they intrigue, they assert facts, they play the very devil for a man who takes their fancy. But how could I interest a woman? I had a face like a Requiem. I was dressed like a *sans-culotte.* I was more like an Esquimau than a Frenchman—I, who had formerly been considered one of the smartest of fops in 1799!—I, Chabert, Count of the Empire.

"Well, on the very day when I was turned out into the streets like a dog, I met the quartermaster of whom I just now spoke. This old soldier's name was Boutin. The poor devil and I made the queerest pair of broken-down hacks I ever set eyes on. I met him out walking; but though I recognized him, he could not possibly guess who I was. We went into a tavern together. In there, when I told him my name, Boutin's mouth opened from ear to ear in a roar of laughter, like the bursting of a mortar. That mirth, Monsieur, was one of the keenest pangs I have known. It told me without disguise how great were the changes in me! I was, then, unrecognizable even to the humblest and most grateful of my former friends!

"I had once saved Boutin's life, but it was only the repayment of a debt I owed him. I need not tell you how he did me this service; it was at Ravenna, in Italy. The house where Boutin prevented my being stabbed was not extremely respectable. At that time I was not a colonel, but, like Boutin himself, a common trooper. Happily there were certain details of this adventure which could be known only to us two, and when I recalled them to his mind his incredulity diminished. I then told him the story of my singular experiences. Although my eyes and my voice, he told me, were strangely altered, although I had neither hair, teeth, nor eyebrows, and was as colorless as an Albino, he at last recognized his Colonel in the beggar, after a thousand questions, which I answered triumphantly.

"He related his adventures; they were not less extraor-

dinary than my own; he had lately come back from the frontiers of China, which he had tried to cross after escaping from Siberia. He told me of the catastrophe of the Russian campaign, and of Napoleon's first abdication. That news was one of the things which caused me most anguish!

"We were two curious derelicts, having been rolled over the globe as pebbles are rolled by the ocean when storms bear them from shore to shore. Between us we had seen Egypt, Syria, Spain, Russia, Holland, Germany, Italy and Dalmatia, England, China, Tartary, Siberia; the only thing wanting was that neither of us had been to America or the Indies. Finally, Boutin, who still was more locomotive than I, undertook to go to Paris as quickly as might be to inform my wife of the predicament in which I was. I wrote a long letter full of details to Madame Chabert. That, Monsieur, was the fourth! If I had had any relations, perhaps nothing of all this might have happened; but, to be frank with you, I am but a workhouse child, a soldier, whose sole fortune was his courage, whose sole family is mankind at large, whose country is France, whose only protector is the Almighty.—Nay, I am wrong! I had a father—the Emperor! Ah! if he were but here, the dear man! If he could see *his Chabert*, as he used to call me, in the state in which I am now, he would be in a rage! What is to be done? Our sun is set, and we are all out in the cold now. After all, political events might account for my wife's silence!

"Boutin set out. He was a lucky fellow! He had two bears, admirably trained, which brought him in a living. I could not go with him; the pain I suffered forbade my walking long stages. I wept, Monsieur, when we parted, after I had gone as far as my state allowed in company with him and his bears. At Carlsruhe I had an attack of neuralgia in the head, and lay for six weeks on straw in an inn.—I should never have ended if I were to tell you all the distresses of my life as a beggar. Moral suffering, before which physical suffering pales, nevertheless excites less pity, because it is not seen. I remember shedding tears, as I stood in front

of a fine house in Strasburg where I once had given an entertainment, and where nothing was given me, not even a piece of bread. Having agreed with Boutin on the road I was to take, I went to every post-office to ask if there were a letter or some money for me. I arrived at Paris without having found either. What despair I had been forced to endure! 'Boutin must be dead!' I told myself, and in fact the poor fellow was killed at Waterloo. I heard of his death later, and by mere chance. His errand to my wife had, of course, been fruitless.

"At last I entered Paris—with the Cossacks. To me this was grief on grief. On seeing the Russians in France, I quite forgot that I had no shoes on my feet nor money in my pocket. Yes, Monsieur, my clothes were in tatters. The evening before I reached Paris I was obliged to bivouac in the woods of Claye. The chill of the night air no doubt brought on an attack of some nameless complaint which seized me as I was crossing the Faubourg Saint-Martin. I dropped almost senseless at the door of an ironmonger's shop. When I recovered I was in a bed in the Hotel-Dieu. There I stayed very contentedly for about a month. I was then turned out; I had no money, but I was well, and my feet were on the good stones of Paris. With what delight and haste did I make my way to the Rue du Mont-Blanc, where my wife should be living in a house belonging to me! Bah! the Rue du Mont-Blanc was now the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin; I could not find my house; it had been sold and pulled down. Speculators had built several houses over my gardens. Not knowing that my wife had married M. Ferraud, I could obtain no information.

"At last I went to the house of an old lawyer who had been in charge of my affairs. This worthy man was dead, after selling his connection to a younger man. This gentleman informed me, to my great surprise, of the administration of my estate, the settlement of the moneys, of my wife's marriage, and the birth of her two children. When I told him that I was Colonel Chabert, he laughed so heartily that

I left him without saying another word. My detention at Stuttgart had suggested possibilities of Charenton, and I determined to act with caution. Then, Monsieur, knowing where my wife lived, I went to her house, my heart high with hope.—Well," said the Colonel, with a gesture of concentrated fury, "when I called under an assumed name I was not admitted, and on the day when I used my own I was turned out of doors.

"To see the Countess come home from a ball or the play in the early morning, I have sat whole nights through, crouching close to the wall of her gateway. My eyes pierced the depths of the carriage, which flashed past me with the swiftness of lightning, and I caught a glimpse of the woman who is my wife and no longer mine. Oh, from that day I have lived for vengeance!" cried the old man in a hollow voice, and suddenly standing up in front of Derville. "She knows that I am alive; since my return she has had two letters written with my own hand. She loves me no more!—I —I know not whether I love or hate her. I long for her and curse her by turns. To me she owes all her fortune, all her happiness; well, she has not sent me the very smallest pittance. Sometimes I do not know what will become of me!"

With these words the veteran dropped on to his chair again and remained motionless. Derville sat in silence, studying his client.

"It is a serious business," he said at length, mechanically. "Even granting the genuineness of the documents to be procured from Heilsberg, it is not proved to me that we can at once win our case. It must go before three tribunals in succession. I must think such a matter over with a clear head; it is quite exceptional."

"Oh," said the Colonel, coldly, with a haughty jerk of his head, "if I fail, I can die—but not alone."

The feeble old man had vanished. The eyes were those of a man of energy, lighted up with the spark of desire and revenge.

"We must perhaps compromise," said the lawyer.

"Compromise!" echoed Colonel Chabert. "Am I dead, or am I alive?"

"I hope, Monsieur," the attorney went on, "that you will follow my advice. Your cause is mine. You will soon perceive the interest I take in your situation, almost unexampled in judicial records. For the moment I will give you a letter to my notary, who will pay you to your order fifty francs every ten days. It would be unbecoming for you to come here to receive alms. If you are Colonel Chabert, you ought to be at no man's mercy. I shall regard these advances as a loan; you have estates to recover; you are rich."

This delicate compassion brought tears to the old man's eyes. Derville rose hastily, for it was perhaps not correct for a lawyer to show emotion; he went into the adjoining room, and came back with an unsealed letter, which he gave to the Colonel. When the poor man held it in his hand, he felt through the paper two gold pieces.

"Will you be good enough to describe the documents, and tell me the name of the town, and in what kingdom?" said the lawyer.

The Colonel dictated the information, and verified the spelling of the names of places; then he took his hat in one hand, looked at Derville, and held out the other—a horny hand, saying with much simplicity:

"On my honor, sir, after the Emperor, you are the man to whom I shall owe most. You are a splendid fellow!"

The attorney clapped his hand into the Colonel's, saw him to the stairs, and held a light for him.

"Boucard," said Derville to his head clerk, "I have just listened to a tale that may cost me five-and-twenty louis. If I am robbed, I shall not regret the money, for I shall have seen the most consummate actor of the day."

When the Colonel was in the street and close to a lamp, he took the two twenty-franc pieces out of the letter and looked at them for a moment under the light. It was the first gold he had seen for nine years.

"I may smoke cigars!" he said to himself.

About three months after this interview, at night, in Derville's room, the notary commissioned to advance the half-pay on Derville's account to his eccentric client, came to consult the attorney on a serious matter, and began by begging him to refund the six hundred francs that the old soldier had received.

"Are you amusing yourself with pensioning the old army?" said the notary, laughing—a young man named Crottat, who had just bought up the office in which he had been head clerk, his chief having fled in consequence of a disastrous bankruptcy.

"I have to thank you, my dear sir, for reminding me of that affair," replied Derville. "My philanthropy will not carry me beyond twenty-five louis; I have, I fear, already been the dupe of my patriotism."

As Derville finished the sentence, he saw on his desk the papers his head clerk had laid out for him. His eye was struck by the appearance of the stamps—long, square, and triangular, in red and blue ink, which distinguished a letter that had come through the Prussian, Austrian, Bavarian, and French post-offices.

"Ah ha!" said he with a laugh, "here is the last act of the comedy; now we shall see if I have been taken in!"

He took up the letter and opened it; but he could not read it; it was written in German.

"Boucard, go yourself and have this letter translated, and bring it back immediately," said Derville, half opening his study door, and giving the letter to the head clerk.

The notary at Berlin, to whom the lawyer had written, informed him that the documents he had been requested to forward would arrive within a few days of this note announcing them. They were, he said, all perfectly regular and duly witnessed, and legally stamped to serve as evidence in law. He also informed him that almost all the witnesses to the facts recorded under these affidavits were still to be found at Eylau, in Prussia, and that the woman

to whom M. le Comte Chabert owed his life was still living in a suburb of Heilsberg.

"This looks like business," cried Derville, when Boucard had given him the substance of the letter. "But look here, my boy," he went on, addressing the notary, "I shall want some information which ought to exist in your office. Was it not that old rascal Roguin—?"

"We will say that unfortunate, that ill-used Roguin," interrupted Alexandre Crottat with a laugh.

"Well, was it not that ill-used man who has just carried off eight hundred thousand francs of his clients' money, and reduced several families to despair, who effected the settlement of Chabert's estate? I fancy I have seen that in the documents in our case of Ferraud."

"Yes," said Crottat. "It was when I was third clerk; I copied the papers and studied them thoroughly. Rose Chapotel, wife and widow of Hyacinthe, called Chabert, Count of the Empire, grand officer of the Legion of Honor. They had married without settlement; thus, they held all the property in common. To the best of my recollection, the personalty was about six hundred thousand francs. Before his marriage, Comte Chabert had made a will in favor of the hospitals of Paris, by which he left them one-quarter of the fortune he might possess at the time of his decease, the State to take the other quarter. The will was contested, there was a forced sale, and then a division, for the attorneys went at a pace. At the time of the settlement the monster who was then governing France handed over to the widow, by special decree, the portion bequeathed to the treasury."

"So that Comte Chabert's personal fortune was no more than three hundred thousand francs?"

"Consequently so it was, old fellow!" said Crottat. "You lawyers sometimes are very clear-headed, though you are accused of false practices in pleading for one side or the other."

Colonel Chabert, whose address was written at the bottom of the first receipt he had given the notary, was lodging in

the Faubourg Saint-Marceau, Rue du Petit-Banquier, with an old quartermaster of the Imperial Guard, now a cow-keeper, named Vergniaud. Having reached the spot, Derville was obliged to go on foot in search of his client, for his coachman declined to drive along an unpaved street, where the ruts were rather too deep for cab wheels. Looking about him on all sides, the lawyer at last discovered at the end of the street nearest to the boulevard, between two walls built of bones and mud, two shabby stone gate-posts, much knocked about by carts, in spite of two wooden stumps that served as blocks. These posts supported a crossbeam with a pent-house coping of tiles, and on the beam, in red letters, were the words, "Vergniaud, dairyman." To the right of this inscription were some eggs, to the left a cow, all painted in white. The gate was open, and no doubt remained open all day. Beyond a good-sized yard there was a house facing the gate, if indeed the name of house may be applied to one of the hovels built in the neighborhood of Paris, which are like nothing else, not even the most wretched dwellings in the country, of which they have all the poverty without their poetry.

Indeed, in the midst of fields, even a hovel may have a certain grace derived from the pure air, the verdure, the open country—a hill, a serpentine road, vineyards, quick-set hedges, moss-grown thatch and rural implements; but poverty in Paris gains dignity only by horror. Though recently built, this house seemed ready to fall into ruins. None of its materials had found a legitimate use; they had been collected from the various demolitions which are going on every day in Paris. On a shutter made of the boards of a shop-sign Derville read the words, "Fancy Goods." The windows were all mismatched and grotesquely placed. The ground floor, which seemed to be the habitable part, was on one side raised above the soil, and on the other sunk in the rising ground. Between the gate and the house lay a puddle full of stable litter, into which flowed the rain-water and house waste. The back wall of this frail construction, which

seemed rather more solidly built than the rest, supported a row of barred hutches, where rabbits bred their numerous families. To the right of the gate was the cowhouse, with a loft above for fodder; it communicated with the house through the dairy. To the left was a poultry yard, with a stable and pigsties, the roofs finished, like that of the house, with rough deal boards nailed so as to overlap, and shabbily thatched with rushes.

Like most of the places where the elements of the huge meal daily devoured by Paris are every day prepared, the yard Derville now entered showed traces of the hurry that comes of the necessity for being ready at a fixed hour. The large pot-bellied tin cans in which milk is carried, and the little pots for cream, were flung pell-mell at the dairy door, with their linen-covered stoppers. The rags that were used to clean them fluttered in the sunshine, riddled with holes, hanging to strings fastened to poles. The placid horse, of a breed known only to milk-women, had gone a few steps from the cart, and was standing in front of the stable, the door being shut. A goat was munching the shoots of a starved and dusty vine that clung to the cracked yellow wall of the house. A cat, squatting on the cream jars, was licking them over. The fowls, scared by Derville's approach, scuttered away screaming, and the watch-dog barked.

"And the man who decided the victory at Eylau is to be found here!" said Derville to himself, as his eyes took in at a glance the general effect of the squalid scene.

The house had been left in charge of three little boys. One, who had climbed to the top of a cart loaded with hay, was pitching stones into the chimney of a neighboring house, in the hope that they might fall into a saucepan; another was trying to get a pig into a cart by the back board, which rested on the ground; while the third, hanging on in front, was waiting till the pig had got into the cart, to hoist it by making the whole thing tilt. When Derville asked them if M. Chabert lived there, neither of them replied, but all three

looked at him with a sort of bright stupidity, if I may combine those two words. Derville repeated his questions, but without success. Provoked by the saucy cunning of these three imps, he abused them with the sort of pleasantry which young men think they have a right to address to little boys, and they broke the silence with a horse-laugh. Then Derville was angry.

The Colonel, hearing him, now came out of a little low room, close to the dairy, and stood on the threshold of his doorway with indescribable military coolness. He had in his mouth a very finely colored pipe—a technical phrase to a smoker—a humble, short clay pipe of the kind called "*brûle-gueule.*" He lifted the peak of a dreadfully greasy cloth cap, saw Derville, and came straight across the midden to join his benefactor the sooner, calling out in friendly tones to the boys: "Silence in the ranks!"

The children at once kept a respectful silence, which showed the power the old soldier had over them.

"Why did you not write to me?" he said to Derville. "Go along by the cowhouse! There—the path is paved there," he exclaimed, seeing the lawyer's hesitancy, for he did not wish to wet his feet in the manure heap.

Jumping from one dry spot to another, Derville reached the door by which the Colonel had come out. Chabert seemed but ill pleased at having to receive him in the bedroom he occupied; and, in fact, Derville found but one chair there. The Colonel's bed consisted of some trusses of straw, over which his hostess had spread two or three of those old fragments of carpet, picked up Heaven knows where, which milk-women use to cover the seats of their carts. The floor was simply the trodden earth. The walls, sweating saltpetre, green with mould, and full of cracks, were so excessively damp that on the side where the Colonel's bed was a reed mat had been nailed. The famous box-coat hung on a nail. Two pairs of old boots lay in a corner. There was not a sign of linen. On the worm-eaten table the "Bulletins de la Grande Armée," reprinted by

Plancher, lay open, and seemed to be the Colonel's reading; his countenance was calm and serene in the midst of this squalor. His visit to Derville seemed to have altered his features; the lawyer perceived in them traces of a happy feeling, a particular gleam set there by hope.

"Does the smell of a pipe annoy you?" he said, placing the dilapidated straw-bottomed chair for his lawyer.

"But, Colonel, you are dreadfully uncomfortable here!"

The speech was wrung from Derville by the distrust natural to lawyers, and the deplorable experience which they derive early in life from the appalling and obscure tragedies at which they look on.

"Here," said he to himself, "is a man who has of course spent my money in satisfying a trooper's three theological virtues—play, wine, and women!"

"To be sure, Monsieur, we are not distinguished for luxury here. It is a camp lodging, tempered by friendship, but—" And the soldier shot a deep glance at the man of law—"I have done no one wrong, I have never turned my back on anybody, and I sleep in peace."

Derville reflected that there would be some want of delicacy in asking his client to account for the sums of money he had advanced, so he merely said:

"But why would you not come to Paris, where you might have lived as cheaply as you do here, but where you would have been better lodged?"

"Why," replied the Colonel, "the good folk with whom I am living had taken me in and fed me *gratis* for a year. How could I leave them just when I had a little money? Besides, the father of those three pickles is an old *Egyptian*—"

"An Egyptian!"

"We give that name to the troopers who came back from the expedition into Egypt, of which I was one. Not merely are all who get back brothers; Vergniaud was in my regiment. We have shared a draught of water in the desert; and besides, I have not yet finished teaching his brats to read."

"He might have lodged you better for your money," said Derville.

"Bah!" said the Colonel, "his children sleep on the straw as I do. He and his wife have no better bed; they are very poor, you see. They have taken a bigger business than they can manage. But if I recover my fortune . . . However, it does very well."

"Colonel, to-morrow, or next day, I shall receive your papers from Heilsberg. The woman who dug you out is still alive!"

"Curse the money! To think I haven't got any!" he cried, flinging his pipe on the ground.

Now, a well-colored pipe is to a smoker a precious possession; but the impulse was so natural, the emotion so generous, that every smoker, and the excise office itself, would have pardoned this crime of treason to tobacco. Perhaps the angels may have picked up the pieces.

"Colonel, it is an exceedingly complicated business," said Derville, as they left the room to walk up and down in the sunshine.

"To me," said the soldier, "it appears exceedingly simple. I was thought to be dead, and here I am! Give me back my wife and my fortune; give me the rank of General, to which I have a right, for I was made Colonel of the Imperial Guard the day before the battle of Eylau."

"Things are not done so in the legal world," said Derville. "Listen to me. You are Colonel Chabert, I am glad to think it; but it has to be proved judicially to persons whose interest it will be to deny it. Hence, your papers will be disputed. That contention will give rise to ten or twelve preliminary inquiries. Every question will be sent under contradiction up to the supreme court, and give rise to so many costly suits, which will hang on for a long time, however eagerly I may push them. Your opponents will demand an inquiry, which we cannot refuse, and which may necessitate the sending of a commission of investigation to Prussia. But even if we hope for the best;

supposing that justice should at once recognize you as Colonel Chabert—can we know how the questions will be settled that will arise out of the very innocent bigamy committed by the Comtesse Ferraud?

"In your case, the point of law is unknown to the Code, and can only be decided as a point in equity, as a jury decides in the delicate cases presented by the social eccentricities of some criminal prosecutions. Now, you had no children by your marriage; M. le Comte Ferraud has two. The judges might pronounce against the marriage where the family ties are weakest, to the confirmation of that where they are stronger, since it was contracted in perfect good faith. Would you be in a very becoming moral position if you insisted, at your age, and in your present circumstances, in resuming your rights over a woman who no longer loves you? You will have both your wife and her husband against you, two important persons who might influence the Bench. Thus, there are many elements which would prolong the case; you will have time to grow old in the bitterest regrets."

"And my fortune?"

"Do you suppose you had a fine fortune?"

"Had I not thirty thousand francs a year?"

"My dear Colonel, in 1799 you made a will before your marriage, leaving one-quarter of your property to hospitals."

"That is true."

"Well, when you were reported dead, it was necessary to make a valuation, and have a sale, to give this quarter away. Your wife was not particular about honesty to the poor. The valuation, in which she no doubt took care not to include the ready money or jewelry, or too much of the plate, and in which the furniture would be estimated at two-thirds of its actual cost, either to benefit her, or to lighten the succession duty, and also because a valuer can be held responsible for the declared value—the valuation thus made stood at six hundred thousand francs. Your wife had a right to half for her share. Everything was

sold and bought in by her; she got something out of it all, and the hospitals got their seventy-five thousand francs. Then, as the remainder went to the State, since you had made no mention of your wife in your will, the Emperor restored to your widow by decree the residue which would have reverted to the Exchequer. So, now, what can you claim? Three hundred thousand francs, no more, and minus the costs."

"And you call that justice!" said the Colonel, in dismay.

"Why, certainly—"

"A pretty kind of justice!"

"So it is, my dear Colonel. You see that what you thought so easy is not so. Madame Ferraud might even choose to keep the sum given to her by the Emperor."

"But she was not a widow. The decree is utterly void—"

"I agree with you. But every case can get a hearing. Listen to me. I think that under these circumstances a compromise would be both for her and for you the best solution of the question. You will gain by it a more considerable sum than you can prove a right to."

"That would be to sell my wife!"

"With twenty-four thousand francs a year you could find a woman who, in the position in which you are, would suit you better than your own wife, and make you happier. I propose going this very day to see the Comtesse Ferraud and sounding the ground; but I would not take such a step without giving you due notice."

"Let us go together."

"What, just as you are?" said the lawyer. "No, my dear Colonel, no. You might lose your case on the spot."

"Can I possibly gain it?"

"On every count," replied Derville. "But, my dear Colonel Chabert, you overlook one thing. I am not rich; the price of my connection is not wholly paid up. If the bench should allow you a maintenance, that is to say, a sum advanced on your prospects, they will not do so till you have

proved that you are Comte Chabert, grand officer of the Legion of Honor."

"To be sure, I am a grand officer of the Legion of Honor; I had forgotten that," said he simply.

"Well, until then," Derville went on, "will you not have to engage pleaders, to have documents copied, to keep the underlings of the law going, and to support yourself? The expenses of the preliminary inquiries will, at a rough guess, amount to ten or twelve thousand francs. I have not so much to loan you—I am crushed as it is by the enormous interest I have to pay on the money I borrowed to buy my business; and you?—Where can you find it?"

Large tears gathered in the poor veteran's faded eyes, and rolled down his withered cheeks. This outlook of difficulties discouraged him. The social and the legal world weighed on his breast like a nightmare.

"I will go to the foot of the Vendôme column!" he cried. "I will call out: 'I am Colonel Chabert who rode through the Russian square at Eylau!'—The statue—he—he will know me."

"And you will find yourself in Charenton."

At this terrible name the soldier's transports collapsed.

"And will there be no hope for me at the Ministry of War?"

"The war office!" said Derville. "Well, go there; but take a formal legal opinion with you, nullifying the certificate of your death. The government offices would be only too glad if they could annihilate the men of the Empire."

The Colonel stood for a while, speechless, motionless, his eyes fixed, but seeing nothing, sunk in bottomless despair. Military justice is ready and swift; it decides with Turklike finality, and almost always rightly. This was the only justice known to Chabert. As he saw the labyrinth of difficulties into which he must plunge, and how much money would be required for the journey, the poor old soldier was mortally hit in that power peculiar to man, and called the Will. He thought it would be impossible to live as party to a law-

suit; it seemed a thousand times simpler to remain poor and a beggar, or to enlist as a trooper if any regiment would pass him.

His physical and mental sufferings had already impaired his bodily health in some of the most important organs. He was on the verge of one of those maladies for which medicine has no name, and of which the seat is in some degree variable, like the nervous system itself, the part most frequently attacked of the whole human machine—a malady which may be designated as the heart-sickness of the unfortunate. However serious this invisible but real disorder might already be, it could still be cured by a happy issue. But a fresh obstacle, an unexpected incident, would be enough to wreck this vigorous constitution, to break the weakened springs, and produce the hesitancy, the aimless, unfinished movements, which physiologists know well in men undermined by grief.

Derville, detecting in his client the symptoms of extreme dejection, said to him:

"Take courage; the end of the business cannot fail to be in your favor. Only, consider whether you can give me your whole confidence and blindly accept the result I may think best for your interests."

"Do what you will," said Chabert.

"Yes, but you surrender yourself to me like a man marching to his death."

"Must I not be left to live without a position, without a name? Is that endurable?"

"That is not my view of it," said the lawyer. "We will try a friendly suit, to annul both your death certificate and your marriage, so as to put you in possession of your rights. You may even, by Comte Ferraud's intervention, have your name replaced on the army list as general, and no doubt you will get a pension."

"Well, proceed then," said Chabert. "I put myself entirely in your hands."

"I will send you a power of attorney to sign," said Der-

ville. "Good-by. Keep up your courage. If you want money, rely on me."

Chabert warmly wrung the lawyer's hand, and remained standing with his back against the wall, not having the energy to follow him excepting with his eyes. Like all men who know but little of legal matters, he was frightened by this unforeseen struggle.

During their interview, several times, the figure of a man posted in the street had come forward from behind one of the gate-pillars, watching for Derville to depart, and he now accosted the lawyer. He was an old man, wearing a blue waistcoat and a white-plaited kilt, like a brewer's; on his head was an otter-skin cap. His face was tanned, hollow-cheeked, and wrinkled, but ruddy on the cheekbones by hard work and exposure to the open air.

"Asking your pardon, sir," said he, taking Derville by the arm, "if I take the liberty of speaking to you. But I fancied, from the look of you, that you were a friend of our General's."

"And what then?" replied Derville. "What concern have you with him?—But who are you?" said the cautious lawyer.

"I am Louis Vergniaud," he at once replied. "I have two words to say to you."

"So you are the man who has lodged Comte Chabert as I have found him?"

"Asking your pardon, sir, he has the best room. I would have given him mine if I had had but one; I could have slept in the stable. A man who has suffered as he has, who teaches my kids to read, a general, an Egyptian, the first lieutenant I ever served under—What do you think?—Of us all, he is best served. I shared what I had with him. Unfortunately, it is not much to boast of—bread, milk, eggs. Well, well; it's neighbors' fare, sir. And he is heartily welcome.—But he has hurt our feelings."

"He?"

"Yes, sir, hurt our feelings. To be plain with you, I

have taken a larger business than I can manage, and he saw it. Well, it worried him; he must needs mind the horse! I says to him, 'Really, General—' 'Bah!' says he, 'I am not going to eat my head off doing nothing. I learned to rub a horse down many a year ago.'—I had some bills out for the purchase money of my dairy—a fellow named Grados— Do you know him, sir?"

"But, my good man, I have not time to listen to your story. Only tell me how the Colonel offended you."

"He hurt our feelings, sir, as sure as my name is Louis Vergniaud, and my wife cried about it. He heard from our neighbors that we had not a sou to begin to meet the bills with. The old soldier, as he is, he saved up all you gave him, he watched for the bill to come in, and he paid it. Such a trick! While my wife and me, we knew he had no tobacco, poor old boy, and went without.—Oh! now—yes, he has his cigar every morning! I would sell my soul for it—No, we are hurt. Well, so I wanted to ask you—for he said you were a good sort—to loan us a hundred crowns on the stock, so that we may get him some clothes, and furnish his room. He thought he was getting us out of debt, you see? Well, it's just the other way; the old man is running us into debt—and hurt our feelings!—He ought not to have stolen a march on us like that. And we his friends, too!—On my word as an honest man, as sure as my name is Louis Vergniaud, I would sooner sell up and enlist than fail to pay you back your money—"

Derville looked at the dairyman, and stepped back a few paces to glance at the house, the yard, the manure-pool, the cowhouse, the rabbits, the children.

"On my honor, I believe it is characteristic of virtue to have nothing to do with riches!" thought he.

"All right, you shall have your hundred crowns, and more. But I shall not give them to you; the Colonel will be rich enough to help, and I will not deprive him of the pleasure."

"And will that be soon?"

"Why, yes."

"Ah, dear God! how glad my wife will be!" and the cowkeeper's tanned face seemed to expand.

"Now," said Derville to himself, as he got into his cab again, "let us call on our opponent. We must not show our hand, but try to see hers, and win the game at one stroke. She must be frightened. She is a woman. Now, what frightens women most? A woman is afraid of nothing but . . ."

And he set to work to study the Countess's position, falling into one of those brown studies to which great politicians give themselves up when concocting their own plans and trying to guess the secrets of a hostile Cabinet. Are not attorneys, in a way, statesmen in charge of private affairs?

But a brief survey of the situation in which the Comte Ferraud and his wife now found themselves is necessary for a comprehension of the lawyer's cleverness.

Monsieur le Comte Ferraud was the only son of a former Councillor in the old *Parlement* of Paris, who had emigrated during the Reign of Terror, and so, though he saved his head, lost his fortune. He came back under the Consulate, and remained persistently faithful to the cause of Louis XVIII., in whose circle his father had moved before the Revolution. He thus was one of the party in the Faubourg Saint-Germain which nobly stood out against Napoleon's blandishments. The reputation for capacity gained by young Count—then simply called Monsieur—Ferraud made him the object of the Emperor's advances, for he was often as well pleased at his conquests among the aristocracy as at gaining a battle. The Count was promised the restitution of his title, of such of his estates as had not been sold, and he was shown in perspective a place in the ministry or as senator.

The Emperor fell.

At the time of Comte Chabert's death, M. Ferraud was a young man of six-and-twenty, without fortune, of pleasing appearance, who had had his successes, and whom the Faubourg Saint-Germain had adopted as doing it credit; but Madame la Comtesse Chabert had managed to turn her share

of her husband's fortune to such good account that, after eighteen months of widowhood, she had about forty thousand francs a year. Her marriage to the young Count was not regarded as news in the circles of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Napoleon, approving of this union, which carried out his idea of fusion, restored to Madame Chabert the money falling to the Exchequer under her husband's will; but Napoleon's hopes were again disappointed. Madame Ferraud was not only in love with her lover; she had also been fascinated by the notion of getting into the haughty society which, in spite of its humiliation, was still predominant at the Imperial Court. By this marriage all her vanities were as much gratified as her passions. She was to become a real fine lady. When the Faubourg Saint-Germain understood that the young Count's marriage did not mean desertion, its drawing-rooms were thrown open to his wife.

Then came the Restoration. The Count's political advancement was not rapid. He understood the exigencies of the situation in which Louis XVIII. found himself; he was one of the inner circle who waited till the "Gulf of Revolution should be closed"—for this phrase of the King's, at which the Liberals laughed so heartily, had a political sense. The order quoted in the long lawyer's preamble at the beginning of this story had, however, put him in possession of two tracts of forest, and of an estate which had considerably increased in value during its sequestration. At the present moment, though Comte Ferraud was a Councillor of State and a Director-General, he regarded his position as merely the first step of his political career.

Wholly occupied as he was by the anxieties of consuming ambition, he had attached to himself, as secretary, a ruined attorney named Delbecq, a more than clever man, versed in all the resources of the law, to whom he left the conduct of his private affairs. This shrewd practitioner had so well understood his position with the Count as to be honest in his own interest. He hoped to get some place by his master's influence, and he made the Count's fortune his first care.

His conduct so effectually gave the lie to his former life that he was regarded as a slandered man. The Countess, with the tact and shrewdness of which most women have a share more or less, understood the man's motives, watched him quietly, and managed him so well that she had made good use of him for the augmentation of her private fortune. She had contrived to make Delbecq believe that she ruled her husband, and had promised to get him appointed President of an inferior Court in some important provincial town, if he devoted himself entirely to her interests.

The promise of a place, not dependent on changes of ministry, which would allow of his marrying advantageously, and rising subsequently to a high political position, by being chosen député, made Delbecq the Countess's abject slave. He had never allowed her to miss one of those favorable chances which the fluctuations of the Bourse and the increased value of property afforded to clever financiers in Paris during the first three years after the Restoration. He had trebled his protectress's capital, and all the more easily because the Countess had no scruples as to the means which might make her an enormous fortune as quickly as possible. The emoluments derived by the Count from the places he held she spent on the housekeeping, so as to reinvest her dividends; and Delbecq lent himself to these calculations of avarice without trying to account for her motives. People of that sort never trouble themselves about any secrets of which the discovery is not necessary to their own interests. And, indeed, he naturally found the reason in the thirst for money, which taints almost every Parisian woman; and as a fine fortune was needed to support the pretensions of Comte Ferraud, the secretary sometimes fancied that he saw in the Countess's greed a consequence of her devotion to a husband with whom she still was in love. The Countess buried the secrets of her conduct at the bottom of her heart. There lay the secrets of life and death to her, there lay the turning point of this history.

At the beginning of the year 1818 the Restoration was

settled on an apparently immovable foundation; its doctrines of government, as understood by lofty minds, seemed calculated to bring to France an era of renewed prosperity, and Parisian society changed its aspect. Madame la Comtesse Ferraud found that by chance she had achieved for love a marriage that had brought her fortune and gratified ambition. Still young and handsome, Madame Ferraud played the part of a woman of fashion, and lived in the atmosphere of the Court. Rich herself, with a rich husband who was cried up as one of the ablest men of the royalist party, and, as a friend of the King, certain to be made Minister, she belonged to the aristocracy, and shared its magnificence. In the midst of this triumph she was attacked by a moral canker. There are feelings which women guess in spite of the care men take to bury them. On the first return of the King, Comte Ferraud had begun to regret his marriage. Colonel Chabert's widow had not been the means of allying him to anybody; he was alone and unsupported in steering his way in a course full of shoals and beset by enemies. Also, perhaps, when he came to judge his wife coolly, he may have discerned in her certain vices of education which made her unfit to second him in his schemes.

A speech he made, *à propos* of Talleyrand's marriage, enlightened the Countess, to whom it proved that if he had still been a free man she would never have been Madame Ferraud. What woman could forgive this repentance? Does it not include the germs of every insult, every crime, every form of repudiation? But what a wound must it have left in the Countess's heart, supposing that she lived in the dread of her first husband's return? She had known that he still lived, and she had ignored him. Then during the time when she had heard no more of him, she had chosen to believe that he had fallen at Waterloo with the Imperial Eagle, at the same time as Boutin. She resolved, nevertheless, to bind the Count to her by the strongest of all ties, by a chain of gold, and vowed to be so rich that her fortune might make her second marriage indissoluble, if by chance Colonel Cha-

bert should ever reappear. And he had reappeared; and she could not explain to herself why the struggle she dreaded had not already begun. Suffering, sickness, had perhaps delivered her from that man. Perhaps he was half mad, and Charenton might yet do her justice. She had not chosen to take either Delbecq or the police into her confidence, for fear of putting herself in their power, or of hastening the catastrophe. There are in Paris many women who, like the Countess Ferraud, live with an unknown moral monster, or on the brink of an abyss; a callus forms over the spot that tortures them, and they can still laugh and enjoy themselves.

"There is something very strange in Comte Ferraud's position," said Derville to himself, on emerging from his long revery, as his cab stopped at the door of the Hotel Ferraud in the Rue de Varennes. "How is it that he, so rich as he is, and such a favorite with the King, is not yet a peer of France? It may, to be sure, be true that the King, as Mme. de Grandlieu was telling me, desires to keep up the value of the *pairie* by not bestowing it right and left. And, after all, the son of a Councillor of the *Parlement* is not a Crillon nor a Rohan. A Comte Ferraud can only get into the Upper Chamber surreptitiously. But if his marriage were annulled, could he not get the dignity of some old peer who has only daughters transferred to himself, to the King's great satisfaction? At any rate this will be a good bogie to put forward and frighten the Countess," thought he as he went up the steps.

Derville had without knowing it laid his finger on the hidden wound, put his hand on the canker that consumed Madame Ferraud.

She received him in a pretty winter dining-room, where she was at breakfast, while playing with a monkey tethered by a chain to a little pole with climbing bars of iron. The Countess was in an elegant wrapper; the curls of her hair, carelessly pinned up, escaped from a cap, giving her an arch look. She was fresh and smiling. Silver, gilding, and mother-of-pearl shone on the table, and all about the room

were rare plants growing in magnificent china jars. As he saw Colonel Chabert's wife, rich with his spoil, in the lap of luxury and the height of fashion, while he, poor wretch, was living with a poor dairyman among the beasts, the lawyer said to himself:

"The moral of all this is that a pretty woman will never acknowledge as her husband, nor even as a lover, a man in an old box-coat, a tow wig, and boots with holes in them."

A mischievous and bitter smile expressed the feelings, half philosophical and half satirical, which such a man was certain to experience—a man well situated to know the truth of things in spite of the lies behind which most families in Paris hide their mode of life.

"Good-morning, Monsieur Derville," said she, giving the monkey some coffee to drink.

"Madame," said he, a little sharply, for the light tone in which she spoke jarred on him, "I have come to speak with you on a very serious matter."

"I am so *grieved*, M. le Comte is away—"

"I, Madame, am delighted. It would be grievous if he could be present at our interview. Besides, I am informed through M. Delbecq that you like to manage your own business without troubling the Count."

"Then I will send for Delbecq," said she.

"He would be of no use to you, clever as he is," replied Derville. "Listen to me, Madame; one word will be enough to make you grave. Colonel Chabert is alive!"

"Is it by telling me such nonsense as that that you think you can make me grave?" said she with a shout of laughter. But she was suddenly quelled by the singular penetration of the fixed gaze which Derville turned on her, seeming to read to the bottom of her soul.

"Madame," he said, with cold and piercing solemnity, "you know not the extent of the danger which threatens you. I need say nothing of the indisputable authenticity of the evidence nor of the fulness of proof which testifies to the identity of Comte Chabert. I am not, as you know, the man

to take up a bad cause. If you resist our proceedings to show that the certificate of death was false, you will lose that first case, and that matter once settled, we shall gain every point."

"What, then, do you wish to discuss with me?"

"Neither the Colonel nor yourself. Nor need I allude to the briefs which clever advocates may draw up when armed with the curious facts of this case, or the advantage they may derive from the letters you received from your first husband before your marriage to your second."

"It is false," she cried, with the violence of a spoiled woman. "I never had a letter from Comte Chabert; and if some one is pretending to be the Colonel, it is some swindler, some returned convict, like Coignard perhaps. It makes me shudder only to think of it. Can the Colonel rise from the dead, Monsieur? Bonaparte sent an aide-de-camp to inquire for me on his death, and to this day I draw the pension of three thousand francs granted to his widow by the Government. I have been perfectly in the right to turn away all the Chaberts who have ever come, as I shall all who may come."

"Happily we are alone, Madame. We can tell lies at our ease," said he coolly, and finding it amusing to lash up the Countess's rage so as to lead her to betray herself, by tactics familiar to lawyers, who are accustomed to keep cool when their opponents or their clients are in a passion. "Well, then, we must fight it out," thought he, instantly hitting on a plan to entrap her and show her her weakness.

"The proof that you received the first letter, Madame, is that it contained some securities—"

"Oh, as to securities—that it certainly did not."

"Then you received the letter," said Derville, smiling. "You are caught, Madame, in the first snare laid for you by an attorney, and you fancy you could fight against Justice—"

The Countess colored, and then turned pale, hiding her face in her hands. Then she shook off her shame, and re-

torted with the natural impertinence of such women, "Since you are the so-called Chabert's attorney, be so good as to—"

"Madame," said Derville, "I am at this moment as much your lawyer as I am Colonel Chabert's. Do you suppose I want to lose so valuable a client as you are?—But you are not listening."

"Nay, speak on, Monsieur," said she graciously.

"Your fortune came to you from M. le Comte Chabert, and you cast him off. Your fortune is immense, and you leave him to beg. An advocate can be very eloquent when a cause is eloquent in itself; there are here circumstances which might turn public opinion strongly against you."

"But, Monsieur," said the Comtesse, provoked by the way in which Derville turned and laid her on the gridiron, "even if I grant that your M. Chabert is living, the law will uphold my second marriage on account of the children, and I shall get off with the restitution of two hundred and twenty-five thousand francs to M. Chabert."

"It is impossible to foresee what view the Bench may take of the question. If on one side we have a mother and children, on the other we have an old man crushed by sorrows, made old by your refusals to know him. Where is he to find a wife? Can the judges contravene the law? Your marriage with Colonel Chabert has priority on its side and every legal right. But if you appear under disgraceful colors, you might have an unlooked-for adversary. That, Madame, is the danger against which I would warn you."

"And who is he?"

"Comte Ferraud."

"Monsieur Ferraud has too great an affection for me, too much respect for the mother of his children—"

"Do not talk of such absurd things," interrupted Derville, "to lawyers, who are accustomed to read hearts to the bottom. At this instant Monsieur Ferraud has not the slightest wish to annul your union, and I am quite sure that he adores you; but if some one were to tell him that his

marriage is void, that his wife will be called before the bar of public opinion as a criminal—"

"He would defend me, Monsieur."

"No, Madame."

"What reason could he have for deserting me, Monsieur?"

"That he would be free to marry the only daughter of a peer of France, whose title would be conferred on him by patent from the King."

The Countess turned pale.

"A hit!" said Derville to himself. "I have you on the hip; the poor Colonel's case is won."—"Besides, Madame," he went on aloud, "he would feel all the less remorse because a man covered with glory—a General, Count, Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor—is not such a bad alternative; and if that man insisted on his wife's returning to him—"

"Enough, enough, Monsieur!" she exclaimed. "I will never have any lawyer but you. What is to be done?"

"Compromise!" said Derville.

"Does he still love me?" she said.

"Well, I do not think he can do otherwise."

The Countess raised her head at these words. A flash of hope shone in her eyes; she thought perhaps that she could speculate on her first husband's affection to gain her cause by some feminine cunning.

"I shall await your orders, Madame, to know whether I am to report our proceedings to you, or if you will come to my office to agree to the terms of a compromise," said Derville, taking leave.

A week after Derville had paid these two visits, on a fine morning in June, the husband and wife, who had been separated by an almost supernatural chance, started from the opposite ends of Paris to meet in the office of the lawyer who was engaged by both. The supplies liberally advanced by Derville to Colonel Chabert had enabled him to dress as suited his position in life, and the dead man arrived in a

very decent cab. He wore a wig suited to his face, was dressed in blue cloth with white linen, and wore under his waistcoat the broad red ribbon of the higher grade of the Legion of Honor. In resuming the habits of wealth he had recovered his soldierly style. He held himself up; his face, grave and mysterious-looking, reflected his happiness and all his hopes, and seemed to have acquired youth and *impasto*, to borrow a picturesque word from the painter's art. He was no more like the Chabert of the old box-coat than a cart-wheel double sou is like a newly coined forty-franc piece. The passer-by, only to see him, would have recognized at once one of the noble wrecks of our old army, one of the heroic men on whom our national glory is reflected, as a splinter of ice on which the sun shines seems to reflect every beam. These veterans are at once a picture and a book.

When the Count jumped out of his carriage to go into Derville's office, he did it as lightly as a young man. Hardly had his cab moved off, when a smart brougham drove up, splendid with coats-of-arms. Madame la Comtesse Ferraud stepped out in a dress which, though simple, was cleverly designed to show how youthful her figure was. She wore a pretty drawn bonnet lined with pink, which framed her face to perfection, softening its outlines and making it look younger.

If the clients were rejuvenescent, the office was unaltered, and presented the same picture as that described at the beginning of this story. Simonnin was eating his breakfast, his shoulder leaning against the window, which was then open, and he was staring up at the blue sky in the opening of the courtyard inclosed by four gloomy houses.

"Ah ha!" cried the little clerk, "who will bet an evening at the play that Colonel Chabert is a general, and wears a red ribbon?"

"The chief is a great magician," said Godeschal.

"Then there is no trick to play on him this time?" asked Desroches.

"His wife has taken that in hand, the Comtesse Ferraud," said Boucard.

"What next?" said Godeschal. "Is Comtesse Ferraud required to belong to two men?"

"Here she is," answered Simonnin.

At this moment the Colonel came in and asked for Derville.

"He is at home, sir," said Simonnin.

"So you are not deaf, you young rogue!" said Chabert, taking the gutter-jumper by the ear and twisting it, to the delight of the other clerks, who began to laugh, looking at the Colonel with the curious attention due to so singular a personage.

Comte Chabert was in Derville's private room at the moment when his wife came in by the door of the office.

"I say, Boucard, there is going to be a queer scene in the chief's room! There is a woman who can spend her days alternately, the odd with Comte Ferraud, and the even with Comte Chabert."

"And in leap year," said Godeschal, "they must settle the *count* between them."

"Silence, gentlemen, you can be heard!" said Boucard severely. "I never was in an office where there was so much jesting as there is here over the clients."

Derville had made the Colonel retire to the bedroom when the Countess was admitted.

"Madame," he said, "not knowing whether it would be agreeable to you to meet M. le Comte Chabert, I have placed you apart. If, however, you should wish it—"

"It is an attention for which I am obliged to you."

"I have drawn up the memorandum of an agreement of which you and M. Chabert can discuss the conditions, here, and now. I will go alternately to him and to you, and explain your views respectively."

"Let me see, Monsieur," said the Countess impatiently.

Derville read aloud:

" 'Between the undersigned:

"'M. Hyacinthe Chabert, Count, Maréchal de Camp, and Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor, living in Paris, Rue du Petit Banquier, on the one part;

"'And Madame Rose Chapotel, wife of the aforesaid M. le Comte Chabert, *née*—'"

"Pass over the preliminaries," said she. "Come to the conditions."

"Madame," said the lawyer, "the preamble briefly sets forth the position in which you stand to each other. Then, by the first clause, you acknowledge, in the presence of three witnesses, of whom two shall be notaries, and one the dairyman with whom your husband has been lodging, to all of whom your secret is known, and who will be absolutely silent—you acknowledge, I say, that the individual designated in the documents subjoined to the deed, and whose identity is to be further proved by an act of recognition prepared by your notary, Alexandre Crottat, is your first husband, Comte Chabert. By the second clause Comte Chabert, to secure your happiness, will undertake to assert his rights only under certain circumstances set forth in the deed.—And these," said Derville, in a parenthesis, "are none other than a failure to carry out the conditions of this secret agreement. —M. Chabert, on his part, agrees to accept judgment on a friendly suit, by which his certificate of death shall be annulled, and his marriage dissolved."

"That will not suit me in the least," said the Countess with surprise. "I will be a party to no suit: you know why."

"By the third clause," Derville went on, with imperturbable coolness, "you pledge yourself to secure to Hyacinthe Comte Chabert an income of twenty-four thousand francs on government stock held in his name, to revert to you at his death—"

"But it is much too dear!" exclaimed the Countess.

"Can you compromise the matter cheaper?"

"Possibly."

"But what do you want, Madame?"

"I want—I will not have a lawsuit. I want—"

"You want him to remain dead?" said Derville, interrupting her hastily.

"Monsieur," said the Countess, "if twenty-four thousand francs a year are necessary, we will go to law—"

"Yes, we will go to law," said the Colonel in a deep voice, as he opened the door and stood before his wife, with one hand in his waistcoat and the other hanging by his side —an attitude to which the recollection of his adventure gave horrible significance.

"It is he," said the Countess to herself.

"Too dear!" the old soldier exclaimed. "I have given you near on a million, and you are cheapening my misfortunes. Very well; now I will have you—you and your fortune. Our goods are in common, our marriage is not dissolved—"

"But Monsieur is not Colonel Chabert!" cried the Countess, in feigned amazement.

"Indeed!" said the old man, in a tone of intense irony. "Do you want proofs? I found you in the Palais Royal—"

The Countess turned pale. Seeing her grow white under her rouge, the old soldier paused, touched by the acute suffering he was inflicting on the woman he had once so ardently loved; but she shot such a venomous glance at him that he abruptly went on: "You were with La—"

"Allow me, Monsieur Derville," said the Countess to the lawyer. "You must give me leave to retire. I did not come here to listen to such dreadful things."

She rose and went out. Derville rushed after her; but the Countess had taken wings, and seemed to have flown from the place.

On returning to his private room, he found the Colonel in a towering rage, striding up and down.

"In those times a man took his wife where he chose," said he. "But I was foolish, and chose badly; I trusted to appearances. She has no heart."

"Well, Colonel, was I not right to beg you not to come?

—I am now positive of your identity; when you came in, the Countess gave a little start, of which the meaning was unequivocal. But you have lost your chances. Your wife knows that you are unrecognizable."

"I will kill her!"

"Madness! you will be caught and executed like any common wretch. Besides, you might miss! That would be unpardonable. A man must not miss his shot when he wants to kill his wife.—Let me set things straight; you are only a big child. Go now. Take care of yourself; she is capable of setting some trap for you and shutting you up in Charenton. I will notify her of our proceedings to protect you against a surprise."

The unhappy Colonel obeyed his young benefactor, and went away, stammering apologies. He slowly went down the dark staircase, lost in gloomy thoughts, and crushed perhaps by the blow just dealt him—the most cruel he could feel, the thrust that could most deeply pierce his heart—when he heard the rustle of a woman's dress on the lowest landing, and his wife stood before him.

"Come, Monsieur," said she, taking his arm with a gesture like those familiar to him of old. Her action and the accent of her voice, which had recovered its graciousness, were enough to allay the Colonel's wrath, and he allowed himself to be led to the carriage.

"Well, get in!" said she, when the footman had let down the step.

And, as if by magic, he found himself sitting by his wife in the brougham.

"Where to?" asked the servant.

"To Groslay," said she.

The horses started at once, and carried them all across Paris.

"Monsieur," said the Countess, in a tone of voice which betrayed one of those emotions which are rare in our lives, and which agitate every part of our being. At such moments the heart, fibres, nerves, countenance, soul, and body,

everything, every pore even, feels a thrill. Life no longer seems to be within us; it flows out, springs forth, is communicated as by contagion, transmitted by a look, a tone of voice, a gesture, impressing our will on others. The old soldier started on hearing this single word, this first, terrible "Monsieur!" But still it was at once a reproach and a pardon, a hope and a despair, a question and an answer. This word included them all; none but an actress could have thrown so much eloquence, so many feelings into a single word. Truth is less complete in its utterance; it does not put everything on the outside; it allows us to see what is within. The Colonel was filled with remorse for his suspicions, his demands, and his anger; he looked down not to betray his agitation.

"Monsieur," repeated she, after an imperceptible pause, "I knew you at once."

"Rosine," said the old soldier, "those words contain the only balm that can help me to forget my misfortunes."

Two large tears rolled hot on to his wife's hands, which he pressed to show his paternal affection.

"Monsieur," she went on, "could you not have guessed what it cost me to appear before a stranger in a position so false as mine now is? If I have to blush for it, at least let it be in the privacy of my family. Ought not such a secret to remain buried in our hearts? You will forgive me, I hope, for my apparent indifference to the woes of a Chabert in whose existence I could not possibly believe. I received your letters," she hastily added, seeing in his face the objection it expressed, "but they did not reach me till thirteen months after the battle of Eylau. They were opened, dirty, the writing was unrecognizable; and after obtaining Napoleon's signature to my second marriage contract, I could not help believing that some clever swindler wanted to make a fool of me. Therefore, to avoid disturbing Monsieur Ferraud's peace of mind, and disturbing family ties, I was obliged to take precautions against a pretended Chabert. Was I not right, I ask you?"

"Yes, you were right. It was I who was the idiot, the owl, the dolt, not to have calculated better what the consequences of such a position might be.—But where are we going?" he asked, seeing that they had reached the barrier of La Chapelle.

"To my country house near Groslay, in the valley of Montmorency. There, Monsieur, we will consider the steps to be taken. I know my duties. Though I am yours by right, I am no longer yours in fact. Can you wish that we should become the talk of Paris? We need not inform the public of a situation which for me has its ridiculous side, and let us preserve our dignity. You still love me," she said, with a sad, sweet gaze at the Colonel, "but have not I been authorized to form other ties? In so strange a position, a secret voice bids me trust to your kindness, which is so well known to me. Can I be wrong in taking you as the sole arbiter of my fate? Be at once judge and party to the suit. I trust in your noble character; you will be generous enough to forgive me for the consequences of faults committed in innocence. I may then confess to you: I love M. Ferraud. I believed that I had a right to love him. I do not blush to make this confession to you; even if it offends you, it does not disgrace us. I cannot conceal the facts. When fate made me a widow, I was not a mother."

The Colonel with a wave of his hand bid his wife be silent, and for a mile and a half they sat without speaking a single word. Chabert could fancy he saw the two little ones before him.

"Rosine."

"Monsieur?"

"The dead are very wrong to come to life again."

"Oh, Monsieur, no, no! Do not think me ungrateful. Only, you find me a lover, a mother, while you left me merely a wife. Though it is no longer in my power to love, I know how much I owe you, and I can still offer you all the affection of a daughter."

"Rosine," said the old man in a softened tone, "I no longer feel any resentment against you. We will forget everything," he added, with one of those smiles which always reflect a noble soul; "I have not so little delicacy as to demand the mockery of love from a wife who no longer loves me."

The Countess gave him a flashing look full of such deep gratitude that poor Chabert would have been glad to sink again into his grave at Eylau. Some men have a soul strong enough for such self-devotion, of which the whole reward consists in the assurance that they have made the person they love happy.

"My dear friend, we will talk all this over later when our hearts have rested," said the Countess.

The conversation turned to other subjects, for it was impossible to dwell very long on this one. Though the couple came back again and again to their singular position, either by some allusion or of serious purpose, they had a delightful drive, recalling the events of their former life together and the times of the Empire. The Countess knew how to lend peculiar charm to her reminiscences, and gave the conversation the tinge of melancholy that was needed to keep it serious. She revived his love without awakening his desires, and allowed her first husband to discern the mental wealth she had acquired while trying to accustom him to moderate his pleasure to that which a father may feel in the society of a favorite daughter.

The Colonel had known the Countess of the Empire; he found her a Countess of the Restoration.

At last, by a crossroad, they arrived at the entrance to a large park lying in the little valley which divides the heights of Margency from the pretty village of Groslay. The Countess had there a delightful house, where the Colonel on arriving found everything in readiness for his stay there, as well as for his wife's. Misfortune is a kind of talisman whose virtue consists in its power to confirm our original nature; in some men it increases their distrust and

malignancy, just as it improves the goodness of those who have a kind heart.

Sorrow had made the Colonel even more helpful and good than he had always been, and he could understand some secrets of womanly distress which are unrevealed to most men. Nevertheless, in spite of his loyal trustfulness, he could not help saying to his wife: "Then you felt quite sure you would bring me here?"

"Yes," replied she, "if I found Colonel Chabert in Derville's client."

The appearance of truth she contrived to give to this answer dissipated the slight suspicions which the Colonel was ashamed to have felt. For three days the Countess was quite charming to her first husband. By tender attentions and unfailing sweetness she seemed anxious to wipe out the memory of the sufferings he had endured, and to earn forgiveness for the woes which, as she confessed, she had innocently caused him. She delighted in displaying for him the charms she knew he took pleasure in, while at the same time she assumed a kind of melancholy; for men are more especially accessible to certain ways, certain graces of the heart or of the mind which they cannot resist. She aimed at interesting him in her position, and appealing to his feelings so far as to take possession of his mind and control him despotically.

Ready for anything to attain her ends, she did not yet know what she was to do with this man; but at any rate she meant to annihilate him socially. On the evening of the third day she felt that in spite of her efforts she could not conceal her uneasiness as to the results of her manœuvres. To give herself a minute's reprieve she went up to her room, sat down before her writing-table, and laid aside the mask of composure which she wore in Chabert's presence, like an actress who, returning to her dressing-room after a fatiguing fifth act, drops half dead, leaving with the audience an image of herself which she no longer resembles. She proceeded to finish a letter she had begun to Delbecq, whom she desired

to go in her name and demand of Derville the deeds relating to Colonel Chabert, to copy them, and to come to her at once to Groslay. She had hardly finished when she heard the Colonel's step in the passage; uneasy at her absence, he had come to look for her.

"Alas!" she exclaimed, "I wish I were dead! My position is intolerable . . ."

"Why, what is the matter?" asked the good man.

"Nothing, nothing!" she replied.

She rose, left the Colonel, and went down to speak privately to her maid, whom she sent off to Paris, impressing on her that she was herself to deliver to Delbecq the letter just written, and to bring it back to the writer as soon as he had read it. Then the Countess went out to sit on a bench sufficiently in sight for the Colonel to join her as soon as he might choose. The Colonel, who was looking for her, hastened up and sat down by her.

"Rosine," said he, "what is the matter with you?"

She did not answer.

It was one of those glorious, calm evenings in the month of June, whose secret harmonies infuse such sweetness into the sunset. The air was clear, the stillness perfect, so that far away in the park they could hear the voices of some children, which added a kind of melody to the sublimity of the scene.

"You do not answer me?" the Colonel said to his wife.

"My husband—" said the Countess, who broke off, started a little, and with a blush stopped to ask him, "What am I to say when I speak of M. Ferraud?"

"Call him your husband, my poor child," replied the Colonel, in a kind voice. "Is he not the father of your children?"

"Well, then," she said, "if he should ask what I came here for, if he finds that I came here, alone, with a stranger, what am I to say to him? Listen, Monsieur," she went on, assuming a dignified attitude, "decide my fate, I am resigned to anything—"

"My dear," said the Colonel, taking possession of his wife's hands, "I have made up my mind to sacrifice myself entirely for your happiness—"

"That is impossible!" she exclaimed, with a sudden spasmodic movement. "Remember that you would have to renounce your identity, and in an authenticated form."

"What?" said the Colonel. "Is not my word enough for you?"

The word "authenticated" fell on the old man's heart, and roused involuntary distrust. He looked at his wife in a way that made her color, she cast down her eyes, and he feared that he might find himself compelled to despise her. The Countess was afraid lest she had scared the shy modesty, the stern honesty, of a man whose generous temper and primitive virtues were known to her. Though these feelings had brought the clouds to their brow, they immediately recovered their harmony. This was the way of it. A child's cry was heard in the distance.

"Jules, leave your sister in peace," the Countess called out.

"What, are your children here?" said Chabert.

"Yes, but I told them not to trouble you."

The old soldier understood the delicacy, the womanly tact of so gracious a precaution, and took the Countess's hand to kiss it.

"But let them come," said he.

The little girl ran up to complain of her brother.

"Mamma!"

"Mamma!"

"It was Jules—"

"It was her—"

Their little hands were held out to their mother, and the two childish voices mingled; it was an unexpected and charming picture.

"Poor little things!" cried the Countess, no longer restraining her tears, "I shall have to leave them. To whom will the law assign them? A mother's heart cannot be divided; I want them, I want them."

"Are you making mamma cry?" said Jules, looking fiercely at the Colonel.

"Silence, Jules!" said the mother in a decided tone.

The two children stood speechless, examining their mother and the stranger with a curiosity which it is impossible to express in words.

"Oh, yes!" she cried. "If I am separated from the Count, only leave me my children, and I will submit to anything . . ."

This was the decisive speech which gained all that she had hoped from it.

"Yes," exclaimed the Colonel, as if he were ending a sentence already begun in his mind, "I must return underground again. I had told myself so already."

"Can I accept such a sacrifice?" replied his wife. "If some men have died to save a mistress's honor, they gave their life but once. But in this case you would be giving your life every day. No, no. It is impossible. If it were only your life, it would be nothing; but to sign a declaration that you are not Colonel Chabert, to acknowledge yourself an impostor, to sacrifice your honor, and live a lie every hour of the day! Human devotion cannot go so far. Only think!—No. But for my poor children I would have fled with you by this time to the other end of the world."

"But," said Chabert, "cannot I live here in your little lodge as one of your relations! I am as worn out as a cracked cannon; I want nothing but a little tobacco and the 'Constitutionnel.'"

The Countess melted into tears. There was a contest of generosity between the Comtesse Ferraud and Colonel Chabert, and the soldier came out victorious. One evening, seeing this mother with her children, the soldier was bewitched by the touching grace of a family picture in the country, in the shade and the silence; he made a resolution to remain dead, and, frightened no longer at the authentication of a deed, he asked what he was to do to secure beyond all risk the happiness of this family.

"Do exactly as you like," said the Countess. "I declare to you that I will have nothing to do with this affair. I ought not."

Delbecq had arrived some days before, and, in obedience to the Countess's verbal instructions, the intendant had succeeded in gaining the old soldier's confidence. So on th following morning Colonel Chabert went with the erewhile attorney to Saint-Leu-Taverny, where Delbecq had caused the notary to draw up an affidavit in such terms that, after hearing it read, the Colonel started up and walked out of the office.

"Turf and thunder! What a fool you must think me! Why, I should make myself out a swindler!" he exclaimed.

"Indeed, Monsieur," said Delbecq, "I should advise you not to sign in haste. In your place I would get at least thirty thousand francs a year out of the bargain. Madame would pay them."

After annihilating this scoundrel *emeritus* by the lightning look of an honest man insulted, the Colonel rushed off, carried away by a thousand contrary emotions. He was suspicious, indignant, and calm again by turns.

Finally he made his way back into the park of Groslay by a gap in a fence, and slowly walked on to sit down and rest, and meditate at his ease, in a little room under a gazeebo, from which the road to Saint-Leu could be seen. The path being strewn with the yellowish sand which is used instead of river-gravel, the Countess, who was sitting in the upper room of this little summer-house, did not hear the Colonel's approach, for she was too much preoccupied with the success of her business to pay the smallest attention to the slight noise made by her husband. Nor did the old man notice that his wife was in the room over him.

"Well, Monsieur Delbecq, has he signed?" the Countess asked her secretary, whom she saw alone on the road beyond the hedge of a ha-ha.

"No, Madame. I do not even know what has become of our man. The old horse reared."

"Then we shall be obliged to put him into Charenton," said she, "since we have got him."

The Colonel, who recovered the elasticity of youth to leap the ha-ha, in the twinkling of an eye was standing in front of Delbecq, on whom he bestowed the two finest slaps that ever a scoundrel's cheeks received.

"And you may add that old horses can kick!" said he.

His rage spent, the Colonel no longer felt vigorous enough to leap the ditch. He had seen the truth in all its nakedness. The Countess's speech and Delbecq's reply had revealed the conspiracy of which he was to be the victim. The care taken of him was but a bait to entrap him in a snare. That speech was like a drop of subtle poison, bringing on in the old soldier a return of all his sufferings, physical and moral. He came back to the summer-house through the park gate, walking slowly like a broken man.

Then for him there was to be neither peace nor truce! From this moment he must begin the odious warfare with this woman of which Derville had spoken, enter on a life of litigation, feed on gall, drink every morning of the cup of bitterness. And then—fearful thought!—where was he to find the money needful to pay the cost of the first proceedings? He felt such disgust of life, that if there had been any water at hand he would have thrown himself into it; that if he had had a pistol, he would have blown out his brains. Then he relapsed into the indecision of mind which, since his conversation with Derville at the dairyman's, had changed his character.

At last, having reached the kiosk, he went up to the gazeebo, where little rose-windows afforded a view over each lovely landscape of the valley, and where he found his wife seated on a chair. The Countess was gazing at the distance, and preserved a calm countenance, showing that impenetrable face which women can assume when resolved to do their worst. She wiped her eyes as if she had been weeping, and played absently with the pink ribbons of her sash. Nevertheless, in spite of her apparent assurance, she could not help

shuddering slightly when she saw before her her venerable benefactor, standing with folded arms, his face pale, his brow stern.

"Madame," he said, after gazing at her fixedly for a moment and compelling her to blush, "Madame, I do not curse you—I scorn you. I can now thank the chance that has divided us. I do not feel even a desire for revenge; I no longer love you. I want nothing from you. Live in peace on the strength of my word; it is worth more than the scrawl of all the notaries in Paris. I will never assert my claim to the name I perhaps have made illustrious. I am henceforth but a poor devil named Hyacinthe, who asks no more than his share of the sunshine.—Farewell!"

The Countess threw herself at his feet; she would have detained him by taking his hands, but he pushed her away with disgust, saying: "Do not touch me!"

The Countess's expression when she heard her husband's retreating steps is quite indescribable. Then, with the deep perspicacity given only by utter villany, or by fierce worldly selfishness, she knew that she might live in peace on the word and the contempt of this loyal veteran.

Chabert, in fact, disappeared. The dairyman failed in business, and became a hackney-cab driver. The Colonel, perhaps, took up some similar industry for a time. Perhaps, like a stone flung into a chasm, he went falling from ledge to ledge, to be lost in the mire of rags that seethes through the streets of Paris.

Six months after this event, Derville, hearing no more of Colonel Chabert or the Comtesse Ferraud, supposed that they had no doubt come to a compromise, which the Countess, out of revenge, had had arranged by some other lawyer. So one morning he added up the sums he had advanced to the said Chabert with the costs, and begged the Comtesse Ferraud to claim from M. le Comte Chabert the amount of the bill, assuming that she would know where to find her first husband.

The very next day Comte Ferraud's man of business,

lately appointed President of the County Court in a town of some importance, wrote this distressing note to Derville:

"MONSIEUR—Madame la Comtesse Ferraud desires me to inform you that your client took complete advantage of your confidence, and that the individual calling himself Comte Chabert has acknowledged that he came forward under false pretences.—Yours, etc., DELBECQ."

"One comes across people who are, on my honor, too stupid by half," cried Derville. "They don't deserve to be Christians! Be humane, generous, philanthropical, and a lawyer, and you are bound to be cheated! There is a piece of business that will cost me two thousand-franc notes!"

Some time after receiving this letter, Derville went to the Palais de Justice in search of a pleader to whom he wished to speak, and who was employed in the Police Court. As chance would have it, Derville went into Court Number 6 at the moment when the Presiding Magistrate was sentencing one Hyacinthe to two months' imprisonment as a vagabond, and subsequently to be taken to the Mendicity House of Detention, a sentence which, by magistrate's law, is equivalent to perpetual imprisonment. On hearing the name of Hyacinthe, Derville looked at the delinquent, sitting between two *gendarmes* on the bench for the accused, and recognized in the condemned man his false Colonel Chabert.

The old soldier was placid, motionless, almost absent-minded. In spite of his rags, in spite of the misery stamped on his countenance, it gave evidence of noble pride. His eye had a stoical expression which no magistrate ought to have misunderstood; but when a man has fallen into the hands of justice he is no more than a moral entity, a matter of law or of fact, just as to statists he has become a zero.

When the veteran was taken back to the lockup, to be removed later with the batch of vagabonds at that moment at the bar, Derville availed himself of the privilege accorded to lawyers of going wherever they please in the Courts, and

followed him to the lockup, where he stood scrutinizing him for some minutes, as well as the curious crew of beggars among whom he found himself. The passage to the lockup at that moment afforded one of those spectacles which, unfortunately, neither legislators, nor philanthropists, nor painters, nor writers come to study. Like all the laboratories of the law, this anteroom is a dark and malodorous place; along the walls runs a wooden seat, blackened by the constant presence there of the wretches who come to this meeting-place of every form of social squalor.

A poet might say that the day was ashamed to light up this dreadful sewer through which so much misery flows! There is not a spot on that plank where some crime has not sat, in embryo or matured; not a corner where a man has never stood who, driven to despair by the blight which justice has set upon him after his first fault, has not there begun a career, at the end of which looms the guillotine or the pistol-snap of the suicide. All who fall on the pavement of Paris rebound against these yellow-gray walls, on which a philanthropist who was not a speculator might read a justification of the numerous suicides complained of by hypocritical writers who are incapable of taking a step to prevent them—for that justification is written in that anteroom, like a preface to the dramas of the Morgue, or to those enacted on the Place de la Grève.

At this moment Colonel Chabert was sitting among these men—men with coarse faces, clothed in the horrible livery of misery, and silent at intervals, or talking in a low tone, for three gendarmes on duty paced to and fro, their sabres clattering on the floor.

"Do you recognize me?" said Derville to the old man, standing in front of him.

"Yes, sir," said Chabert, rising.

"If you are an honest man," Derville went on in an undertone, "how could you remain in my debt?"

The old soldier blushed as a young girl might when accused by her mother of a clandestine love affair.

"What! Madame Ferraud has not paid you?" cried he in a loud voice.

"Paid me?" said Derville. "She wrote to me that you were a swindler."

The Colonel cast up his eyes in a sublime impulse of horror and imprecation, as if to call Heaven to witness to this fresh subterfuge.

"Monsieur," said he, in a voice that was calm by sheer huskiness, "get the gendarmes to allow me to go into the lockup, and I will sign an order which will certainly be honored."

At a word from Derville to the sergeant he was allowed to take his client into the room, where Hyacinthe wrote a few lines, and addressed them to the Comtesse Ferraud.

"Send her that," said the soldier, "and you will be paid your costs and the money you advanced. Believe me, Monsieur, if I have not shown you the gratitude I owe you for your kind offices, it is not the less there," and he laid his hand on his heart. "Yes, it is there, deep and sincere. But what can the unfortunate do? They live, and that is all."

"What!" said Derville. "Did you not stipulate for an allowance?"

"Do not speak of it!" cried the old man. "You cannot conceive how deep my contempt is for the outside life to which most men cling. I was suddenly attacked by a sickness—disgust of humanity. When I think that Napoleon is at Saint Helena, everything on earth is a matter of indifference to me. I can no longer be a soldier; that is my only real grief. After all," he added with a gesture of childish simplicity, "it is better to enjoy luxury of feeling than of dress. For my part, I fear nobody's contempt."

And the Colonel sat down on his bench again.

Derville went away. On returning to his office, he sent Godeschal, at that time his second clerk, to the Comtesse Ferraud, who, on reading the note, at once paid the sum due to Comte Chabert's lawyer.

In 1840, toward the end of June, Godeschal, now himself an attorney, went to Ris with Derville, to whom he had succeeded. When they reached the avenue leading from the highroad to Bicêtre, they saw, under one of the elm-trees by the wayside, one of those old, broken and hoary paupers who have earned the Marshal's staff among beggars by living on at Bicêtre as poor women live on at la Salpêtrière. This man, one of the two thousand poor creatures who are lodged in the infirmary for the aged, was seated on a cornerstone, and seemed to have concentrated all his intelligence on an operation well known to these pensioners, which consists in drying their snuffy pocket-handkerchiefs in the sun, perhaps to save washing them. This old man had an attractive countenance. He was dressed in the reddish cloth wrapper-coat which the workhouse affords to its inmates, a sort of horrible livery.

"I say, Derville," said Godeschal to his travelling companion, "look at that old fellow. Isn't he like those grotesque carved figures we get from Germany? And it is alive, perhaps it is happy."

Derville looked at the poor man through his eyeglass, and with a little exclamation of surprise he said: "That old man, my dear fellow, is a whole poem, or, as the romantics say, a drama.—Did you ever meet the Comtesse Ferraud?"

"Yes; she is a clever woman, and agreeable; but rather too pious," said Godeschal.

"That old Bicêtre pauper is her lawful husband, Comte Chabert, the old Colonel. She has had him sent here, no doubt. And if he is in this workhouse instead of living in a mansion, it is solely because he reminded the pretty Countess that he had taken her, like a hackney cab, on the street. I can remember now the tiger's glare she shot at him at that moment."

This opening having excited Godeschal's curiosity, Derville related the story here told.

Two days later, on Monday morning, as they returned to Paris, the two friends looked again at Bicêtre, and Derville

proposed that they should call on Colonel Chabert. Half-way up the avenue they found the old man sitting on the trunk of a felled tree; with his stick in one hand, he was amusing himself with drawing lines in the sand. On looking at him narrowly, they perceived that he had been breakfasting elsewhere than at Bicêtre.

"Good-morning, Colonel Chabert," said Derville.

"Not Chabert! not Chabert! My name is Hyacinthe," replied the veteran. "I am no longer a man, I am No. 164, Room 7," he added, looking at Derville with timid anxiety, the fear of an old man and a child.—"Are you going to visit the man condemned to death?" he asked after a moment's silence. "He is not married! He is very lucky!"

"Poor fellow!" said Godeschal. "Would you like something to buy snuff?"

With all the simplicity of a street Arab, the Colonel eagerly held out his hand to the two strangers, who each gave him a twenty-franc piece; he thanked them with a puzzled look, saying: "Brave troopers!"

He ported arms, pretended to take aim at them, and shouted with a smile: "Fire! both arms! *Vive Napoléon!*" And he drew a flourish in the air with his stick.

"The nature of his wound has no doubt made him childish," said Derville.

"Childish! he?" said another old pauper, who was looking on. "Why, there are days when you had better not tread on his corns. He is an old rogue, full of philosophy and imagination. But to-day, what can you expect! He has had his Monday treat.—He was here, Monsieur, so long ago as 1820. At that time a Prussian officer, whose chaise was crawling up the hill of Villejuif, came by on foot. We two were together, Hyacinthe and I, by the roadside. The officer, as he walked, was talking to another, a Russian, or some animal of the same species, and when the Prussian saw the old boy, just to make fun, he said to him, 'Here is an old cavalryman who must have been at Rossbach.'—'I was too young to be there,' said Hyacinthe. 'But I was at

Jena.' And the Prussian made off pretty quick, without asking any more questions."

"What a destiny!" exclaimed Derville. "Taken out of the Foundling Hospital to die in the Infirmary for the Aged, after helping Napoleon between whiles to conquer Egypt and Europe.—Do you know, my dear fellow," Derville went on after a pause, "there are in modern society three men who can never think well of the world—the priest, the doctor, and the man of law? And they wear black robes, perhaps because they are in mourning for every virtue and every illusion. The most hapless of the three is the lawyer. When a man comes in search of the priest, he is prompted by repentance, by remorse, by beliefs which make him interesting, which elevate him and comfort the soul of the intercessor whose task will bring him a sort of gladness; he purifies, repairs, and reconciles. But we lawyers, we see the same evil feelings repeated again and again, nothing can correct them; our offices are sewers which can never be cleansed.

"How many things have I learned in the exercise of my profession! I have seen a father die in a garret, deserted by two daughters, to whom he had given forty thousand francs a year! I have known wills burned; I have seen mothers robbing their children, wives killing their husbands, and working on the love they could inspire to make the men idiotic or mad, that they might live in peace with a lover. I have seen women teaching the child of their marriage such tastes as must bring it to the grave in order to benefit the child of an illicit affection. I could not tell you all I have seen, for I have seen crimes against which justice is impotent. In short, all the horrors that romancers suppose they have invented are still below the truth.—You will know something of these pretty things; as for me, I am going to live in the country with my wife. I have a horror of Paris."

"I have seen plenty of them already in Desroches' office," replied Godeschal.

PARIS, *February–March, 1832.*

# THE COMMISSION IN LUNACY

*Dedicated to Monsieur le Contre-Amiral Bazoche, Governor of the Isle of Bourbon, by the grateful writer,*
*De Balzac*

*IN 1828*, at about one o'clock one morning, two persons came out of a large house in the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, near the Elysée-Bourbon. One was a famous doctor, Horace Bianchon; the other was one of the most elegant men in Paris, the Baron de Rastignac; they were friends of long standing. Each had sent away his carriage, and no cab was to be seen in the street; but the night was fine, and the pavement dry.

"We will walk as far as the Boulevard," said Eugène de Rastignac to Bianchon. "You can get a hackney cab at the club; there is always one to be found there till daybreak. Come with me as far as my house."

"With pleasure."

"Well, and what have you to say about it?"

"About that woman?" said the doctor coldly.

"There I recognize my Bianchon!" exclaimed Rastignac.

"Why, how?"

"Well, my dear fellow, you speak of the Marquise d'Espard as if she were a case for your hospital."

"Do you want to know what I think, Eugène? If you throw over Madame de Nucingen for this Marquise, you will swap a one-eyed horse for a blind one."

"Madame de Nucingen is six-and-thirty, Bianchon."

"And this woman is three-and-thirty," said the doctor quickly.

"Her worst enemies only say six-and-twenty."

"My dear boy, when you really want to know a woman's age, look at her temples and the tip of her nose. Whatever women may achieve with their cosmetics, they can do nothing against those incorruptible witnesses to their experiences. There each year of life has left its stigmata. When a woman's temples are flaccid, seamed, withered in a particular way; when at the tip of her nose you see those minute specks, which look like the imperceptible black smuts which are shed in London by the chimneys in which coal is burned. . . . Your servant, sir! That woman is more than thirty. She may be handsome, witty, loving—whatever you please, but she is past thirty, she is arriving at maturity. I do not blame men who attach themselves to that kind of woman; only, a man of your superior distinction must not mistake a winter pippin for a little summer apple, smiling on the bough, and waiting for you to crunch it. Love never goes to study the registers of birth and marriage; no one loves a woman because she is handsome or ugly, stupid or clever; we love because we love."

"Well, for my part, I love for quite other reasons. She is Marquise d'Espard; she was a Blamont-Chauvry; she is the fashion; she has soul; her foot is as pretty as the Duchesse de Berri's; she has perhaps a hundred thousand francs a year—some day, perhaps, I may marry her! In short, she will put me into a position which will enable me to pay my debts."

"I thought you were rich," interrupted Bianchon.

"Bah! I have twenty thousand francs a year—just enough to keep up my stables. I was thoroughly done, my dear fellow, in that Nucingen business; I will tell you about that.—I have got my sisters married; that is the clearest profit I can show since we last met; and I would rather have them provided for than have five hundred thousand francs a year. Now, what would you have me do? I am ambitious. To what can Madame de Nucingen lead? A year more and I shall be shelved, stuck in a pigeon-hole like a married man. I have all the discomforts of marriage

and of single life, without the advantages of either; a false position, to which every man must come who remains tied too long to the same apron-string."

"So you think you will come upon a treasure here?" said Bianchon. "Your Marquise, my dear fellow, does not hit my fancy at all."

"Your liberal opinions blur your eyesight. If Madame d'Espard were a Madame Rabourdin . . ."

"Listen to me. Noble or simple, she would still have no soul; she would still be a perfect type of selfishness. Take my word for it, medical men are accustomed to judge of people and things; the sharpest of us read the soul while we study the body. In spite of that pretty boudoir where we have spent this evening, in spite of the magnificence of the house, it is quite possible that Madame la Marquise is in debt."

"What makes you think so?"

"I do not assert it; I am supposing. She talked of her soul as Louis XVIII. used to talk of his heart. I tell you this: That fragile, fair woman, with her chestnut hair, who pities herself that she may be pitied, enjoys an iron constitution, an appetite like a wolf's, and the strength and cowardice of a tiger. Gauze, and silk, and muslin were never more cleverly twisted round a lie! *Ecco.*"

"Bianchon, you frighten me! You have learned a good many things, then, since we lived in the Maison Vauquer?"

"Yes; since then, my boy, I have seen puppets, both dolls and manikins. I know something of the ways of the fine ladies whose bodies we attend to, saving that which is dearest to them, their child—if they love it—or their pretty faces, which they always worship. A man spends his nights by their pillow, wearing himself to death to spare them the slightest loss of beauty in any part; he succeeds, he keeps their secret like the dead; they send to ask for his bill, and think it horribly exorbitant. Who saved them? Nature. Far from recommending him, they speak ill of him, fearing lest he should become the physician of their best friends.

"My dear fellow, those women of whom you say, 'They are angels!' I—I—have seen stripped of the little grimaces under which they hide their soul, as well as of the frippery under which they disguise their defects—without manners and without stays; they are not beautiful.

"We saw a great deal of mud, a great deal of dirt, under the waters of the world when we were aground for a time on the shoals of the Maison Vauquer.—What we saw there was nothing. Since I have gone into higher society, I have seen monsters dressed in satin, Michonneaus in white gloves, Poirets bedizened with orders, fine gentlemen doing more usurious business than old Gobseck! To the shame of mankind, when I have wanted to shake hands with Virtue, I have found her shivering in a loft, persecuted by calumny, half starving on an income or a salary of fifteen hundred francs a year, and regarded as crazy, or eccentric, or imbecile.

"In short, my dear boy, the Marquise is a woman of fashion, and I have a particular horror of that kind of woman. Do you want to know why? A woman who has a lofty soul, fine taste, gentle wit, a generously warm heart, and who lives a simple life, has not a chance of being the fashion. *Ergo:* A woman of fashion and a man in power are analogous; but there is this difference: the qualities by which a man raises himself above others ennoble him and are a glory to him; whereas the qualities by which a woman gains power for a day are hideous vices; she belies her nature to hide her character, and to live the militant life of the world she must have iron strength under a frail appearance.

"I, as a physician, know that a sound stomach excludes a good heart. Your woman of fashion feels nothing; her rage for pleasure has its source in a longing to heat up her cold nature, a craving for excitement and enjoyment, like an old man who stands night after night by the footlights at the opera. As she has more brain than heart, she sacrifices genuine passion and true friends to her triumph, as a general

sends his most devoted subalterns to the front in order to win a battle. The woman of fashion ceases to be a woman; she is neither mother, nor wife, nor lover. She is, medically speaking, sex in the brain. And your Marquise, too, has all the characteristics of her monstrosity, the beak of a bird of prey, the clear, cold eye, the gentle voice—she is as polished as the steel of a machine, she touches everything except the heart."

"There is some truth in what you say, Bianchon."

"Some truth?" replied Bianchon. "It is all true. Do you suppose that I was not struck to the heart by the insulting politeness by which she made me measure the imaginary distance which her noble birth sets between us? That I did not feel the deepest pity for her catlike civilities when I remembered what her object was? A year hence she will not write one word to do me the slightest service, and this evening she pelted me with smiles, believing that I can influence my uncle Popinot, on whom the success of her case—"

"Would you rather she should have played the fool with you, my dear fellow?—I accept your diatribe against women of fashion; but you are beside the mark. I should always prefer for a wife a Marquise d'Espard to the most devout and devoted creature on earth. Marry an angel! you would have to go and bury your happiness in the depths of the country! The wife of a politician is a governing machine, a contrivance that makes compliments and courtesies. She is the most important and most faithful tool which an ambitious man can use; a friend, in short, who may compromise herself without mischief, and whom he may belie without harmful results. Fancy Mahomet in Paris in the nineteenth century! His wife would be a Rohan, a Duchesse de Chevreuse of the Fronde, as keen and as flattering as an Ambassadress, as wily as Figaro. Your loving wives lead nowhere; a woman of the world leads to everything; she is the diamond with which a man cuts every window when he has not the golden key which unlocks every door.

Leave humdrum virtues to the humdrum, ambitious vices to the ambitious.

"Besides, my dear fellow, do you imagine that the love of a Duchesse de Langeais or de Maufrigneuse, or of a Lady Dudley does not bestow immense pleasure? If only you knew how much value the cold, severe style of such women gives to the smallest evidence of their affection! What a delight it is to see a periwinkle piercing through the snow! A smile from below a fan contradicts the reserve of an assumed attitude, and is worth all the unbridled tenderness of your middle-class women with their mortgaged devotion; for, in love, devotion is nearly akin to speculation.

"And, then, a woman of fashion, a Blamont-Chauvry, has her virtues too! Her virtues are fortune, power, effect, a certain contempt of all that is beneath her—"

"Thank you!" said Bianchon.

"Old curmudgeon!" said Rastignac, laughing. "Come—do not be common; do like your friend Desplein; be a Baron, a Knight of Saint-Michael; become a peer of France, and marry your daughters to dukes."

"I! May the five hundred thousand devils—"

"Come, come! Can you be superior only in medicine? Really, you distress me . . ."

"I hate that sort of people; I long for a revolution to deliver us from them forever."

"And so, my dear Robespierre of the lancet, you will not go to-morrow to your uncle Popinot?"

"Yes, I will," said Bianchon; "for you I would go to hell to fetch water . . ."

"My good friend, you really touch me. I have sworn that a commission shall sit on the Marquis. Why, here is even a long-saved tear to thank you."

"But," Bianchon went on, "I do not promise to succeed as you wish with Jean-Jules Popinot. You do not know him. However I will take him to see your Marquise the day after to-morrow; she may get round him if she can. I doubt it. If all the truffles, all the Duchesses, all the mistresses,

and all the charmers in Paris were there in the full bloom of their beauty; if the King promised him the *pairie*, and the Almighty gave him the Order of Paradise with the revenues of Purgatory, not one of all these powers would induce him to transfer a single straw from one saucer of his scales into the other. He is a judge, as Death is Death."

The two friends had reached the office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the corner of the Boulevard des Capucines.

"Here you are at home," said Bianchon, laughing, as he pointed to the ministerial residence. "And here is my carriage," he added, calling a hackney cab. "And these —express our fortune."

"You will be happy at the bottom of the sea, while I am still struggling with the tempests on the surface, till I sink and go to ask you for a corner in your grotto, old fellow!"

"Till Saturday," replied Bianchon.

"Agreed," said Rastignac. "And you promise me Popinot?"

"I will do all my conscience will allow. Perhaps this appeal for a commission covers some little dramorama, to use a word of our good bad times."

"Poor Bianchon! he will never be anything but a good fellow," said Rastignac to himself as the cab drove off.

"Rastignac has given me the most difficult negotiation in the world," said Bianchon to himself, remembering, as he rose next morning, the delicate commission intrusted to him. "However, I have never asked the smallest service from my uncle in Court, and have paid more than a thousand visits gratis for him. And, after all, we are not apt to mince matters between ourselves. He will say Yes or No, and there an end."

After this little soliloquy the famous physician bent his steps, at seven in the morning, toward the Rue du Fouarre, where dwelt Monsieur Jean-Jules Popinot, judge of the Lower Court of the Department of the Seine. The Rue du

Fouarre—an old word meaning straw—was in the thirteenth century the most important street in Paris. There stood the Schools of the University, where the voices of Abelard and of Gerson were heard in the world of learning. It is now one of the dirtiest streets of the Twelfth Arrondissement, the poorest quarter of Paris, that in which two-thirds of the population lack firing in winter, which leaves most brats at the gate of the Foundling Hospital, which sends most beggars to the poorhouse, most rag-pickers to the street corners, most decrepit old folk to bask against the walls on which the sun shines, most delinquents to the police courts.

Half-way down this street, which is always damp, and where the gutter carries to the Seine the blackened waters from some dye-works, there is an old house, restored no doubt under Francis I., and built of bricks held together by a few courses of masonry. That it is substantial seems proved by the shape of its front wall, not uncommonly seen in some parts of Paris. It bellies, so to speak, in a manner caused by the protuberance of its first floor, crushed under the weight of the second and third, but upheld by the strong wall of the ground floor. At first sight it would seem as though the piers between the windows, though strengthened by the stone mullions, must give way; but the observer presently perceives that, as in the tower at Bologna, the old bricks and old time-eaten stones of this house persistently preserve their centre of gravity.

At every season of the year the solid piers of the ground floor have the yellow tone and the imperceptible sweating surface that moisture gives to stone. The passer-by feels chilled as he walks close to this wall, where worn corner-stones ineffectually shelter him from the wheels of vehicles. As is always the case in houses built before carriages were in use, the vault of the doorway forms a very low archway not unlike the barbican of a prison. To the right of this entrance there are three windows, protected outside by iron gratings of so close a pattern that the curious cannot possibly see the use made of the dark, damp rooms within, and the

panes too are dirty and dusty; to the left are two similar windows, one of which is sometimes open, exposing to view the porter, his wife, and his children; swarming, working, cooking, eating, and screaming, in a floored and wainscoted room where everything is dropping to pieces, and into which you descend two steps—a depth which seems to suggest the gradual elevation of the soil of Paris.

If on a rainy day some foot-passenger takes refuge under the long vault, with projecting lime-washed beams, which leads from the door to the staircase, he will hardly fail to pause and look at the picture presented by the interior of this house. To the left is a square garden-plot, allowing of not more than four long steps in each direction, a garden of black soil, with trellises bereft of vines, and where, in default of vegetation under the shade of two trees, papers collect, old rags, potsherds, bits of mortar fallen from the roof; a barren ground, where time has shed on the walls, and on the trunks and branches of the trees, a powdery deposit like cold soot. The two parts of the house, set at a right angle, derive light from this garden-court shut in by two adjoining houses built on wooden piers, decrepit and ready to fall, where on each floor some grotesque evidence is to be seen of the craft pursued by the lodger within. Here long poles are hung with immense skeins of dyed worsted put out to dry; there, on ropes, dance clean-washed shirts; higher up, on a shelf, volumes display their freshly marbled edges; women sing, husbands whistle, children shout; the carpenter saws his planks, a copper-turner makes the metal screech; all kinds of industries combine to produce a noise which the number of instruments renders distracting.

The general system of decoration in this passage, which is neither courtyard, garden, nor vaulted way, though a little of all, consists of wooden pillars resting on square stone blocks, and forming arches. Two archways open on to the little garden; two others, facing the front gateway, lead to a wooden staircase, with an iron balustrade that was once a miracle of smith's work, so whimsical are the shapes given

to the metal; the worn steps creak under every tread. The entrance to each flat has an architrave dark with dirt, grease, and dust, and outer doors, covered with Utrecht velvet set with brass nails, once gilt, in a diamond pattern. These relics of splendor show that in the time of Louis XIV. the house was the residence of some Councillor to the Parlement, some rich priests, or some treasurer of the ecclesiastical revenue. But these vestiges of former luxury bring a smile to the lips by the artless contrast of past and present.

M. Jean-Jules Popinot lived on the first floor of this house, where the gloom, natural to all first floors in Paris houses, was increased by the narrowness of the street. This old tenement was known to all the twelfth *arrondissement*, on which Providence had bestowed this lawyer, as it gives a beneficent plant to cure or alleviate every malady. Here is a sketch of the man whom the brilliant Marquise d'Espard hoped to fascinate.

M. Popinot, as is seemly for a magistrate, was always dressed in black—a style which contributed to make him ridiculous in the eyes of those who were in the habit of judging everything from a superficial examination. Men who are jealous of maintaining the dignity required by this color ought to devote themselves to constant and minute care of their person; but our dear M. Popinot was incapable of forcing himself to the puritanical cleanliness which black demands. His trousers, always threadbare, looked like camlet —the stuff of which attorneys' gowns are made; and his habitual stoop set them, in time, in such innumerable creases, that in places they were traced with lines, whitish, rusty, or shiny, betraying either sordid avarice, or the most unheeding poverty. His coarse worsted stockings were twisted anyhow in his ill-shaped shoes. His linen had the tawny tinge acquired by long sojourn in a wardrobe, showing that the late lamented Madame Popinot had had a mania for much linen; in the Flemish fashion, perhaps, she had given herself the trouble of a great wash no more than twice a year. The

old man's coat and waistcoat were in harmony with his trousers, shoes, stockings, and linen. He always had the luck of his carelessness; for, the first day he put on a new coat, he unfailingly matched it with the rest of his costume by staining it with incredible promptitude. The good man waited till his housekeeper told him that his hat was too shabby before buying a new one. His necktie was always crumpled and starchless, and he never set his dog's-eared shirt collar straight after his judge's bands had disordered it. He took no care of his gray hair, and shaved but twice a week. He never wore gloves, and generally kept his hand stuffed into his empty trousers' pockets; the soiled pocket-holes, almost always torn, added a final touch to the slovenliness of his person.

Any one who knows the Palais de Justice at Paris, where every variety of black attire may be studied, can easily imagine the appearance of M. Popinot. The habit of sitting for days at a time modifies the structure of the body, just as the fatigue of hearing interminable pleadings tells on the expression of a magistrate's face. Shut up as he is in courts ridiculously small, devoid of architectural dignity, and where the air is quickly vitiated, a Paris judge inevitably acquires a countenance puckered and seamed by reflection, and depressed by weariness; his complexion turns pallid, acquiring an earthy or greenish hue according to his individual temperament. In short, within a given time the most blooming young man is turned into an "inasmuch" machine—an instrument which applies the Code to individual cases with the indifference of clock-work.

Hence, nature having bestowed on M. Popinot a not too pleasing exterior, his life as a lawyer had not improved it. His frame was graceless and angular. His thick knees, huge feet, and broad hands formed a contrast with a priestlike face having a vague resemblance to a calf's head, meek to unmeaningness, and but little brightened by divergent, bloodless eyes, divided by a straight flat nose, surmounted by a flat forehead, flanked by enormous ears, flabby and graceless.

His thin, weak hair showed the baldness through various irregular partings.

One feature only commended this face to the physiognomist. This man had a mouth to whose lips divine kindness lent its sweetness. They were wholesome, full, red lips, finely wrinkled, sinuous, mobile, by which nature had given expression to noble feeling; lips which spoke to the heart and proclaimed the man's intelligence and lucidity, a gift of second-sight, and a heavenly temper; and you would have judged him wrongly from looking merely at his sloping forehead, his fireless eyes, and his shambling gait. His life answered to his countenance; it was full of secret labor, and hid the virtue of a saint. His superior knowledge of law proved so strong a recommendation at the time when Napoleon was reorganizing it in 1808 and 1811 that, by the advice of Cambacérès, he was one of the first men named to sit on the Imperial High Court of Justice at Paris. Popinot was no schemer. Whenever any demand was made, any request preferred for an appointment, the Minister would overlook Popinot, who never set foot in the house of the High Chancellor or the Chief Justice. From the High Court he was sent down to the Common Court, and pushed to the lowest rung of the ladder by active struggling men. There he was appointed supernumerary judge. There was a general outcry among the lawyers: "Popinot a supernumerary!" Such injustice struck the legal world with dismay—the attorneys, the registrars, everybody but Popinot himself, who made no complaint. The first clamor over, everybody was satisfied that all was for the best in the best of all possible worlds, which must certainly be the legal world. Popinot remained supernumerary judge till the day when the most famous Great Seal under the Restoration avenged the oversights heaped on this modest and uncomplaining man by the Chief Justices of the Empire. After being a supernumerary for twelve years, M. Popinot would no doubt die a puisne judge of the Court of the Seine.

To account for the obscure fortunes of one of the superior

men of the legal profession, it is necessary to enter here into some details which will serve to reveal his life and character, and which will, at the same time, display some of the wheels of the great machine known as Justice. M. Popinot was classed by the three Presidents who successively controlled the Court of the Seine under the category of possible judges, the stuff of which judges are made. Thus classified, he did not achieve the reputation for capacity which his previous labors had deserved. Just as a painter is invariably included in a category as a landscape painter, a portrait painter, a painter of history, of sea pieces, or of genre, by a public consisting of artists, connoisseurs, and simpletons, who, out of envy, or critical omnipotence, or prejudice, fence in his intellect, assuming, one and all, that there are ganglions in every brain—a narrow judgment which the world applies to writers, to statesmen, to everybody who begins with some specialty before being hailed as omniscient; so Popinot's fate was sealed, and he was hedged round to do a particular kind of work. Magistrates, attorneys, pleaders, all who pasture on the legal common, distinguish two elements in every case —law and equity. Equity is the outcome of facts, law is the application of principles to facts. A man may be right in equity but wrong in law, without any blame to the judge. Between his conscience and the facts there is a whole gulf of determining reasons unknown to the judge, but which condemn or legitimize the act. A judge is not God; his duty is to adapt facts to principles, to judge cases of infinite variety while measuring them by a fixed standard.

France employs about six thousand judges; no generation has six thousand great men at her command, much less can she find them in the legal profession. Popinot, in the midst of the civilization of Paris, was just a very clever cadi, who, by the character of his mind, and by dint of rubbing the letter of the law into the essence of facts, had learned to see the error of spontaneous and violent decisions. By the help of his judicial second-sight he could pierce the double casing of lies in which advocates hide the heart of a trial. He was

a judge, as the great Desplein was a surgeon; he probed men's consciences as the anatomist probed their bodies. His life and habits had led him to an exact appreciation of their most secret thoughts by a thorough study of facts.

He sifted a case as Cuvier sifted the earth's crust. Like that great thinker, he proceeded from deduction to deduction before drawing his conclusions, and reconstructed the past career of a conscience as Cuvier reconstructed an Anoplotherium. When considering a brief he would often wake in the night, startled by a gleam of truth suddenly sparkling in his brain. Struck by the deep injustice, which is the end of these contests, in which everything is against the honest man, everything to the advantage of the rogue, he often summed up in favor of equity against law in such cases as bore on questions of what may be termed divination. Hence he was regarded by his colleagues as a man not of a practical mind; his arguments on two lines of deduction made their deliberations lengthy. When Popinot observed their dislike to listening to him he gave his opinion briefly; it was said that he was not a good judge in this class of cases; but as his gift of discrimination was remarkable, his opinion lucid, and his penetration profound, he was considered to have a special aptitude for the laborious duties of an examining judge. So an examining judge he remained during the greater part of his legal career.

Although his qualifications made him eminently fitted for its difficult functions, and he had the reputation of being so learned in criminal law that his duty was a pleasure to him, the kindness of his heart constantly kept him in torture, and he was nipped as in a vise between his conscience and his pity. The services of an examining judge are better paid than those of a judge in civil actions, but they do not therefore prove a temptation; they are too onerous. Popinot, a man of modest and virtuous learning, without ambition, an indefatigable worker, never complained of his fate; he sacrificed his tastes and his compassionate soul to the public good, and allowed himself to be transported to the

noisome pools of criminal examinations, where he showed himself alike severe and beneficent. His clerk sometimes would give the accused some money to buy tobacco, or a warm winter garment, as he led him back from the judge's office to the *Souricière*, the mouse-trap—the House of Detention where the accused are kept under the orders of the Examining Judge. He knew how to be an inflexible judge and a charitable man. And no one extracted a confession so easily as he without having recourse to judicial trickery. He had, too, all the acumen of an observer. This man, apparently so foolishly good-natured, simple, and absent-minded, could guess all the cunning of a prison wag, unmask the astutest street hussy, and subdue a scoundrel. Unusual circumstances had sharpened his perspicacity; but to relate these we must intrude on his domestic history, for in him the judge was the social side of the man; another man, greater and less known, existed within.

Twelve years before the beginning of this story, in 1816, during the terrible scarcity which coincided disastrously with the stay in France of the so-called Allies, Popinot was appointed President of the Commission Extraordinary formed to distribute food to the poor of his neighborhood, just when he had planned to move from the Rue du Fouarre, which he as little liked to live in as his wife did. The great lawyer, the clear-sighted criminal judge, whose superiority seemed to his colleagues a form of aberration, had for five years been watching legal results without seeing their causes. As he scrambled up into lofts, as he saw the poverty, as he studied the desperate necessities which gradually bring the poor to criminal acts, as he estimated their long struggles, compassion filled his soul. The judge then became the Saint Vincent de Paul of these grown-up children, these suffering toilers. The transformation was not immediately complete. Beneficence has its temptations as vice has. Charity consumes a saint's purse, as roulette consumes the possessions of a gambler, quite gradually. Popinot went from misery to misery, from charity to charity; then, by the time he had

lifted all the rags which cover public pauperism, like a bandage under which an inflamed wound lies festering, at the end of a year he had become the Providence incarnate of that quarter of the town. He was a member of the Benevolent Committee and of the Charity Organization. Wherever any gratuitous services were needed he was ready, and did everything without fuss, like the *man with the short cloak*, who spends his life in carrying soup round the markets and other places where there are starving folk.

Popinot was fortunate in acting on a larger circle and in a higher sphere; he had an eye on everything, he prevented crime, he gave work to the unemployed, he found a refuge for the helpless, he distributed aid with discernment wherever danger threatened, he made himself the counsellor of the widow, the protector of homeless children, the sleeping partner of small traders. No one at the Courts, no one in Paris, knew of this secret life of Popinot's. There are virtues so splendid that they necessitate obscurity; men make haste to hide them under a bushel. As to those whom the lawyer succored, they, hard at work all day and tired at night, were little able to sing his praises; theirs was the gracelessness of children, who can never pay because they owe too much. There is such compulsory ingratitude; but what heart that has sown good to reap gratitude can think itself great?

By the end of the second year of his apostolic work, Popinot had turned the storeroom at the bottom of his house into a parlor, lighted by the three iron-barred windows. The walls and ceiling of this spacious room were whitewashed, and the furniture consisted of wooden benches like those seen in schools, a clumsy cupboard, a walnut-wood writing-table, and an armchair. In the cupboard were his registers of donations, his tickets for orders for bread, and his diary. He kept his ledger like a tradesman, that he might not be ruined by kindness. All the sorrows of the neighborhood were entered and numbered in a book, where each had its little account, as merchants' customers have theirs. When there was any question as to a man or a

family needing help, the lawyer could always command information from the police.

Lavienne, a man made for his master, was his aide-de-camp. He redeemed or renewed pawntickets, and visited the districts most threatened with famine, while his master was in court.

From four till seven in the morning in summer, from six till nine in winter, this room was full of women, children, and paupers, while Popinot gave audience. There was no need for a stove in winter; the crowd was so dense that the air was warmed; only Lavienne strewed straw on the wet floor. By long use the benches were as polished as varnished mahogany; at the height of a man's shoulders the wall had a coat of dark, indescribable color, given to it by the rags and tattered clothes of these poor creatures. The poor wretches loved Popinot so well that when they assembled before his door was opened, before daybreak on a winter's morning, the women warming themselves with their foot-braziers, the men swinging their arms for circulation, never a sound had disturbed his sleep. Rag-pickers and other toilers of the night knew the house, and often saw a light burning in the lawyer's private room at unholy hours. Even thieves, as they passed by, said, "That is his house," and respected it. The morning he gave to the poor, the midday hours to criminals, the evening to law work.

Thus the gift of observation that characterized Popinot was necessarily *bifrons;* he could guess the virtues of a pauper—good feelings nipped, fine actions in embryo, unrecognized self-sacrifice, just as he could read at the bottom of a man's conscience the faintest outlines of a crime, the slenderest threads of wrongdoing, and infer all the rest.

Popinot's inherited fortune was a thousand crowns a year. His wife, sister to M. Bianchon *senior*, a doctor at Sancerre, had brought him about twice as much. She, dying five years since, had left her fortune to her husband. As the salary of a supernumerary judge is not large, and Popinot had been a fully salaried judge only for four years,

we may guess his reasons for parsimony in all that concerned his person and mode of life, when we consider how small his means were and how great his beneficence. Besides, is not such indifference to dress, as stamped Popinot an absent-minded man, a distinguishing mark of scientific attainment, of art passionately pursued, of a perpetually active mind? To complete this portrait, it will be enough to add that Popinot was one of the few judges of the Court of the Seine on whom the ribbon of the Legion of Honor had not been conferred.

Such was the man who had been instructed by the President of the Second Chamber of the Court—to which Popinot had belonged since his reinstatement among the judges in civil law—to examine the Marquis d'Espard at the request of his wife, who sued for a Commission in Lunacy.

The Rue du Fouarre, where so many unhappy wretches swarmed in the early morning, would be deserted by nine o'clock, and as gloomy and squalid as ever. Bianchon put his horse to a trot in order to find his uncle in the midst of his business. It was not without a smile that he thought of the curious contrast the judge's appearance would make in Madame d'Espard's room; but he promised himself that he would persuade him to dress in a way that should not be too ridiculous.

"If only my uncle happens to have a new coat!" said Bianchon to himself, as he turned into the Rue du Fouarre, where a pale light shone from the parlor windows. "I shall do well, I believe, to talk that over with Lavienne."

At the sound of wheels half a score of startled paupers came out from under the gateway, and took off their hats on recognizing Bianchon; for the doctor, who treated gratuitously the sick recommended to him by the lawyer, was not less well known than he to the poor creatures assembled there.

Bianchon found his uncle in the middle of the parlor, where the benches were occupied by patients presenting such grotesque singularities of costume as would have made

the least artistic passer-by turn round to gaze at them. A draughtsman—a Rembrandt, if there were one in our day—might have conceived of one of his finest compositions from seeing these children of misery, in artless attitudes, and all silent.

Here was the rugged countenance of an old man with a white beard and an apostolic head—a Saint Peter ready to hand; his chest, partly uncovered, showed salient muscles, the evidence of an iron constitution which had served him as a fulcrum to resist a whole poem of sorrows. There a young woman was suckling her youngest-born to keep it from crying, while another of about five stood between her knees. Her white bosom, gleaming amid rags, the baby with its transparent flesh-tints, and the brother, whose attitude promised a street Arab in the future, touched the fancy with pathos by its almost graceful contrast with the long row of faces crimson with cold, in the midst of which sat this family group. Further away, an old woman, pale and rigid, had the repulsive look of rebellious pauperism, eager to avenge all its past woes in one day of violence.

There, again, was the young workman, weakly and indolent, whose brightly intelligent eye revealed fine faculties crushed by necessity struggled with in vain, saying nothing of his sufferings, and nearly dead for lack of an opportunity to squeeze between the bars of the vast stews where the wretched swim round and round and devour each other.

The majority were women; their husbands, gone to their work, left it to them, no doubt, to plead the cause of the family with the ingenuity which characterizes the woman of the people, who is almost always queen in her hovel. You would have seen a torn bandanna on every head, on every form a skirt deep in mud, ragged kerchiefs, worn and dirty jackets, but eyes that burned like live coals. It was a horrible assemblage, raising at first sight a feeling of disgust, but giving a certain sense of terror the instant you perceived that the resignation of these souls, all engaged in the struggle for every necessary of life, was purely fortuitous, a speculation

on benevolence. The two tallow candles which lighted the parlor flickered in a sort of fog caused by the fetid atmosphere of the ill-ventilated room.

The magistrate himself was not the least picturesque figure in the midst of this assembly. He had on his head a rusty cotton nightcap; as he had no cravat, his neck was visible, red with cold and wrinkled, in contrast with the threadbare collar of his old dressing-gown. His worn face had the half-stupid look that comes of absorbed attention. His lips, like those of all men who work, were puckered up like a bag with the strings drawn tight. His knitted brows seemed to bear the burden of all the sorrows confided to him: he felt, analyzed, and judged them all. As watchful as a Jew money-lender, he never raised his eyes from his books and registers but to look into the very heart of the persons he was examining, with the flashing glance by which a miser expresses his alarm.

Lavienne, standing behind his master, ready to carry out his orders, served no doubt as a sort of police, and welcomed new-comers by encouraging them to get over their shyness. When the doctor appeared there was a stir on the benches. Lavienne turned his head, and was strangely surprised to see Bianchon.

"Ah! It is you, old boy!" exclaimed Popinot, stretching himself. "What brings you so early?"

"I was afraid lest you should make an official visit about which I wish to speak to you before I could see you."

"Well," said the lawyer, addressing a stout little woman who was still standing close to him, "if you do not tell me what it is you want, I cannot guess it, child."

"Make haste," said Lavienne. "Do not waste other people's time."

"Monsieur," said the woman at last, turning red, and speaking so low as only to be heard by Popinot and Lavienne, "I have a green-grocery truck, and I have my last baby out at nurse, and I owe for his keep. Well, I had hidden my little bit of money—"

"Yes; and your man took it?" said Popinot, guessing the sequel.

"Yes, sir."

"What is your name?"

"La Pomponne."

"And your husband's?"

"Toupinet."

"Rue du Petit Banquier?" said Popinot, turning over his register. "He is in prison," he added, reading a note at the margin of the section in which this family was described.

"For debt, my kind Monsieur."

Popinot shook his head.

"But I have nothing to buy any stock for my truck; the landlord came yesterday and made me pay up; otherwise I should have been turned out."

Lavienne bent over his master, and whispered in his ear.

"Well, how much do you want to buy fruit in the market?"

"Why, my good Monsieur, to carry on my business, I should want—Yes, I should certainly want ten francs."

Popinot signed to Lavienne, who took ten francs out of a large bag, and handed them to the woman, while the lawyer made a note of the loan in his ledger. As he saw the thrill of delight that made the poor hawker tremble, Bianchon understood the apprehensions that must have agitated her on her way to the lawyer's house.

"You next," said Lavienne to the old man with the white beard.

Bianchon drew the servant aside, and asked him how long this audience would last.

"Monsieur has had two hundred persons this morning, and there are eighty to be turned off," said Lavienne. "You will have time to pay your early visit, sir."

"Here, my boy," said the lawyer, turning round and taking Horace by the arm; "here are two addresses near this—one in the Rue de Seine, and the other in the Rue de l'Arbalète: go there at once. Rue de Seine, a young girl

has just asphyxiated herself; and Rue de l'Arbalète, you will find a man to remove to your hospital. I will wait breakfast for you."

Bianchon returned an hour later. The Rue du Fouarre was deserted; day was beginning to dawn there; his uncle had gone up to his rooms; the last poor wretch whose misery the judge had relieved was departing, and Lavienne's money bag was empty.

"Well, how are they going on?" asked the old lawyer, as the doctor came in.

"The man is dead," replied Bianchon; "the girl will get over it."

Since the eye and hand of a woman had been lacking, the flat in which Popinot lived had assumed an aspect in harmony with its master's. The indifference of a man who is absorbed in one dominant idea had set its stamp of eccentricity on everything. Everywhere lay unconquerable dust, every object was adapted to a wrong purpose with a pertinacity suggestive of a bachelor's home. There were papers in the flower vases, empty ink-bottles on the tables, plates that had been forgotten, matches used as tapers for a minute when something had to be found, drawers or boxes half turned out and left unfinished; in short, all the confusion and vacancies resulting from plans for order never carried out. The lawyer's private room, especially disordered by this incessant rummage, bore witness to his unresting pace, the hurry of a man overwhelmed with business, hunted by contradictory necessities. The bookcase looked as if it had been sacked; there were books scattered over everything, some piled up open, one on another, others on the floor face downward; registers of proceedings laid on the floor in rows, lengthwise, in front of the shelves; and that floor had not been polished for two years.

The tables and shelves were covered with *ex votos*, the offerings of the grateful poor. On a pair of blue glass jars which ornamented the chimney-shelf there were two glass balls, of which the core was made up of many colored frag-

ments, giving them the appearance of some singular natural product. Against the wall hung frames of artificial flowers, and decorations in which Popinot's initials were surrounded by hearts and everlasting flowers. Here were boxes of elaborate and useless cabinet work; there letter-weights carved in the style of work done by convicts in penal servitude. These masterpieces of patience, enigmas of gratitude, and withered bouquets gave the lawyer's room the appearance of a toyshop. The good man used these works of art as hiding-places which he filled with bills, worn-out pens, and scraps of paper. All these pathetic witnesses to his divine charity were thick with dust, dingy, and faded.

Some birds, beautifully stuffed, but eaten by moth, perched in this wilderness of trumpery, presided over by an Angora cat, Madame Popinot's pet, restored to her no doubt with all the graces of life by some impecunious naturalist, who thus repaid a gift of charity with a perennial treasure. Some local artist whose heart had misguided his brush had painted portraits of M. and Madame Popinot. Even in the bedroom there were embroidered pin-cushions, landscapes in cross-stitch, and crosses in folded paper, so elaborately cockled as to show the senseless labor they had cost.

The window-curtains were black with smoke, and the hangings absolutely colorless. Between the fireplace and the large square table at which the magistrate worked, the cook had set two cups of coffee on a small table, and two armchairs, in mahogany and horsehair, awaited the uncle and nephew. As daylight, darkened by the windows, could not penetrate to this corner, the cook had left two dips burning, whose unsnuffed wicks showed a sort of mushroom growth, giving the red light which promises length of life to the candle from slowness of combustion—a discovery due to some miser.

"My dear uncle, you ought to wrap yourself more warmly when you go down to that parlor."

"I cannot bear to keep them waiting, poor souls!—Well, and what do you want of me?"

"I have come to ask you to dine to-morrow with the Marquise d'Espard."

"A relation of ours?" asked Popinot, with such genuine absence of mind that Bianchon laughed.

"No, uncle; the Marquise d'Espard is a high and puissant lady, who has laid before the Courts a petition desiring that a Commission in Lunacy should sit on her husband, and you are appointed—"

"And you want me to dine with her! Are you mad?" said the lawyer, taking up the code of proceedings. "Here, only read this article, prohibiting any magistrate's eating or drinking in the house of either of two parties whom he is called upon to decide between. Let her come and see me, your Marquise, if she has anything to say to me. I was in fact to go to examine her husband to-morrow, after working the case up to-night."

He rose, took up a packet of papers that lay under a weight where he could see it, and after reading the title, he said:

"Here is the affidavit. Since you take an interest in this high and puissant lady, let us see what she wants."

Popinot wrapped his dressing-gown across his body, from which it was constantly slipping and leaving his chest bare; he sopped his bread in the half-cold coffee, and opened the petition, which he read, allowing himself to throw in a parenthesis now and then, and some discussions, in which his nephew took part:

" 'To Monsieur the President of the Civil Tribunal of the Lower Court of the Department of the Seine, sitting at the Palais de Justice.

" 'Madame Jeanne Clémentine Athénaïs de Blamont-Chauvry, wife of M. Charles Maurice Marie Andoche, Comte de Nègrepelisse, Marquis d'Espard'—a very good family—'landowner, the said Mme. d'Espard living in the Rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré, No. 104, and the said M. d'Espard in the Rue de la Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève, No. 22'—to be sure, the President told me he lived in this part

of the town—'having for her solicitor Maitre Desroches'—Desroches! a pettifogging jobber, a man looked down upon by his brother lawyers, and who does his clients no good—"

"Poor fellow!" said Bianchon, "unluckily he has no money, and he rushes round like the devil in holy water—That is all."

" 'Has the honor to submit to you, Monsieur the President, that for a year past the moral and intellectual powers of her husband, M. d'Espard, have undergone so serious a change that at the present day they have reached the state of dementia and idiocy provided for by Article 448 of the Civil Code, and require the application of the remedies set forth by that article, for the security of his fortune and his person, and to guard the interest of his children whom he keeps to live with him.

" 'That, in point of fact, the mental condition of M. d'Espard, which for some years has given grounds for alarm based on the system he has pursued in the management of his affairs, has reached, during the last twelvemonth, a deplorable depth of depression; that his infirm will was the first thing to show the results of the malady; and that its effete state leaves M. the Marquis d'Espard exposed to all the perils of his incompetency, as is proved by the following facts:

" 'For a long time all the income accruing from M. d'Espard's estates are paid, without any reasonable cause, or even temporary advantage, into the hands of an old woman, whose repulsive ugliness is generally remarked on, named Madame Jeanrenaud, living sometimes in Paris, Rue de la Vrillière, No. 8, sometimes at Villeparisis, near Claye, in the Department of Seine et Marne, and for the benefit of her son, aged thirty-six, an officer in the ex-Imperial Guards, whom the Marquis d'Espard has placed by his influence in the King's Guards, as Major in the First Regiment of Cuirassiers. These two persons, who in 1814 were in extreme poverty, have since then purchased house-property of considerable value; among other items, quite recently,

a large house in the Grande Rue Verte, where the said Jeanrenaud is laying out considerable sums in order to settle there with the woman Jeanrenaud, intending to marry; these sums amount already to more than a hundred thousand francs. The marriage has been arranged by the intervention of M. d'Espard with his banker, one Mongenod, whose niece he has asked in marriage for the said Jeanrenaud, promising to use his influence to procure him the title and dignity of Baron. This has in fact been secured by his Majesty's letters patent, dated December 29th of last year, at the request of the Marquis d'Espard, as can be proved by his Excellency the Keeper of the Seals, if the Court should think proper to require his testimony.

" 'That no reason, not even such as morality and the law would concur in disapproving, can justify the influence which the said Mme. Jeanrenaud exerts over M. d'Espard, who, indeed, sees her very seldom; nor account for his strange affection for the said Baron Jeanrenaud, Major, with whom he has but little intercourse. And yet their power is so considerable, that whenever they need money, if only to gratify a mere whim, this lady or her son—' Heh, heh! *no reason even such as morality and the law concur in disapproving!* What does the clerk or the attorney mean to insinuate?" said Popinot.

Bianchon laughed.

" 'This lady, or her son, obtain whatever they ask of the Marquis d'Espard without demur; and if he has not ready money, M. d'Espard draws bills to be paid by the said Mongenod, who has offered to give evidence to that effect for the petitioner.

" 'That, moreover, in further proof of these facts, lately, on the occasion of the renewal of the leases on the Espard estate, the farmers having paid a considerable premium for the renewal of their leases on the old terms, M. Jeanrenaud at once secured the payment of it into his own hands.

" 'That the Marquis d'Espard parts with these sums of money so little of his own free-will, that when he was spoken

to on the subject he seemed to remember nothing of the matter; that whenever anybody of any weight has questioned him as to his devotion to these two persons, his replies have shown so complete an absence of ideas and of sense of his own interests, that there obviously must be some occult cause at work to which the petitioner begs to direct the eye of justice, inasmuch as it is impossible but that this cause should be criminal, malignant, and wrongful, or else of a nature to come under medical jurisdiction; unless this influence is of the kind which constitutes an abuse of moral power—such as can only be described by the word *possession*—' The devil!" exclaimed Popinot. "What do you say to that, doctor? These are strange statements."

"They might certainly," said Bianchon, "be an effect of magnetic force."

"Then do you believe in Mesmer's nonsense, and his tub, and seeing through walls?"

"Yes, uncle," said the doctor gravely. "As I heard you read that petition I thought of that. I assure you that I have verified, in another sphere of action, several analogous facts proving the unlimited influence one man may acquire over another. In contradiction to the opinion of my brethren, I am perfectly convinced of the power of the will regarded as a motor force. All collusion and charlatanism apart, I have seen the results of such a possession. Actions promised during sleep by a magnetized patient to the magnetizer have been scrupulously performed on waking. The will of one had become the will of the other."

"Every kind of action?"

"Yes."

"Even a criminal act?"

"Even a crime."

"If it were not you, I would not listen to such a thing."

"I will make you witness it," said Bianchon.

"Hm, hm," muttered the lawyer. "But supposing that this so-called possession fell under this class of facts, it would be difficult to prove it as legal evidence."

"If this woman Jeanrenaud is so hideously old and ugly, I do not see what other means of fascination she can have used," observed Bianchon.

"But," observed the lawyer, "in 1814, the time at which this fascination is supposed to have taken place, this woman was fourteen years younger; if she had been connected with M. d'Espard ten years before that, these calculations take us back four-and-twenty years, to a time when the lady may have been young and pretty, and have won for herself and her son a power over M. d'Espard which some men do not know how to evade. Though the source of this power is reprehensible in the sight of justice, it is justifiable in the eye of nature. Madame Jeanrenaud may have been aggrieved by the marriage, contracted probably at about that time, between the Marquis d'Espard and Mademoiselle de Blamont-Chauvry, and at the bottom of all this there may be nothing more than the rivalry of two women, since the Marquis has for a long time lived apart from Mme. d'Espard."

"But her repulsive ugliness, uncle."

"Power of fascination is in direct proportion to ugliness," said the lawyer; "that is an old story. And then think of the smallpox, doctor. But to proceed."

" 'That so long ago as in 1815, in order to supply the sums of money required by these two persons, the Marquis d'Espard went with his two children to live in the Rue de la Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève, in rooms quite unworthy of his name and rank'—well, we may live as we please—'that he keeps his two children there, the Comte Clément d'Espard and Vicomte Camille d'Espard, in a style of living quite unsuited to their future prospects, their name and fortune; that he often wants money, to such a point that not long since the landlord, one Mariast, put in an execution on the furniture in the rooms; that when this execution was carried out in his presence, the Marquis d'Espard helped the bailiff, whom he treated like a man of rank, paying him all the marks of attention and respect which he would have

shown to a person of superior birth and dignity to himself.' "

The uncle and nephew glanced at each other and laughed.

" 'That, moreover, every act of his life, besides the facts with reference to the widow Jeanrenaud and the Baron Jeanrenaud, her son, are those of a madman; that for nearly ten years he has given his thoughts exclusively to China, its customs, manners, and history; that he refers everything to a Chinese origin; that when he is questioned on the subject, he confuses the events of the day and the business of yesterday with facts relating to China; that he censures the acts of the Government and the conduct of the King, though he is personally much attached to him, by comparing them with the politics of China.

" 'That this monomania has driven the Marquis d'Espard to conduct devoid of all sense: against the customs of men of rank, and, in opposition to his own professed ideas as to the duties of the nobility, he has joined a commercial undertaking, for which he constantly draws bills which, as they fall due, threaten both his honor and his fortune, since they stamp him as a trader, and in default of payment may lead to his being declared insolvent; that these debts, which are owing to stationers, printers, lithographers, and print-colorists, who have supplied the materials for his publication, called "A Picturesque History of China," now coming out in parts, are so heavy that these tradesmen have requested the petitioner to apply for a Commission in Lunacy with regard to the Marquis d'Espard in order to save their own credit.' "

"The man is mad!" exclaimed Bianchon.

"You think so, do you?" said his uncle. "If you listen to only one bell, you hear only one sound."

"But it seems to me—" said Bianchon.

"But it seems to me," said Popinot, "that if any relation of mine wanted to get hold of the management of my affairs, and if, instead of being a humble lawyer, whose colleagues can, any day, verify what his condition is, I were a duke of

the realm, an attorney with a little cunning, like Desroches, might bring just such a petition against me."

" 'That his children's education has been neglected for this monomania; and that he has taught them, against all the rules of education, the facts of Chinese history, which contradict the tenets of the Catholic Church. He also has them taught the Chinese dialects.' "

"Here Desroches strikes me as funny," said Bianchon.

"The petition is drawn up by his head clerk Godeschal, who, as you know, is not strong in Chinese," said the lawyer.

" 'That he often leaves his children destitute of the most necessary things; that the petitioner, notwithstanding her entreaties, can never see them; that the said Marquis d'Espard brings them to her only once a year; that, knowing the privations to which they are exposed, she makes vain efforts to give them the things most necessary for their existence, and which they require—' Oh! Madame la Marquise, this is preposterous. By proving too much you prove nothing.—My dear boy," said the old man, laying the document on his knee, "where is the mother who ever lacked heart and wit and yearning to such a degree as to fall below the inspirations suggested by her animal instinct? A mother is as cunning to get at her children as a girl can be in the conduct of a love intrigue. If your Marquise really wanted to give her children food and clothes, the Devil himself would not have hindered her, heh? That is rather too big a fable for an old lawyer to swallow!—To proceed.

" 'That at the age the said children have now attained it is necessary that steps should be taken to preserve them from the evil effects of such an education; that they should be provided for as beseems their rank, and that they should cease to have before their eyes the sad example of their father's conduct;

" 'That there are proofs in support of these allegations which the Court can easily order to be produced. Many times has M. d'Espard spoken of the judge of the Twelfth

Arrondissement as a mandarin of the third class; he often speaks of the professors of the Collège Henri IV. as "men of letters" '—and that offends them! 'In speaking of the simplest things, he says, "They were not done so in China"; in the course of the most ordinary conversation he will sometimes allude to Madame Jeanrenaud, or sometimes to events which happened in the time of Louis XIV., and then sit plunged in the darkest melancholy; sometimes he fancies he is in China. Several of his neighbors, among others one Edmé Becker, medical student, and Jean Baptiste Frémiot, a professor, living under the same roof, are of opinion, after frequent intercourse with the Marquis d'Espard, that his monomania with regard to everything Chinese is the result of a scheme laid by the said Baron Jeanrenaud and the widow his mother to bring about the deadening of all the Marquis d'Espard's mental faculties, since the only service which Mme. Jeanrenaud appears to render M. d'Espard is to procure him everything that relates to the Chinese Empire;

" 'Finally, that the petitioner is prepared to show to the Court that the moneys absorbed by the said Baron and Mme. Jeanrenaud between 1814 and 1828 amount to not less than one million francs.

" 'In confirmation of the facts herein set forth, the petitioner can bring the evidence of persons who are in the habit of seeing the Marquis d'Espard, whose names and professions are subjoined, many of whom have urged her to demand a commission in lunacy to declare M. d'Espard incapable of managing his own affairs, as being the only way to preserve his fortune from the effects of his maladministration and his children from his fatal influence.

" 'Taking all this into consideration, M. le Président, and the affidavits subjoined, the petitioner desires that it may please you, inasmuch as the foregoing facts sufficiently prove the insanity and incompetency of the Marquis d'Espard herein described with his titles and residence, to order that, to the end that he may be declared incompetent by law, this petition and the documents in evidence may be laid before the

king's public prosecutor; and that you will charge one of the judges of this Court to make his report to you on any day you may be pleased to name, and thereupon to pronounce judgment,' etc.

"And here," said Popinot, "is the Président's order instructing me!—Well, what does the Marquise d'Espard want with me? I know everything. But I shall go to-morrow with my registrar to see M. le Marquis, for this does not seem at all clear to me."

"Listen, my dear uncle, I have never asked the least little favor of you that had to do with your legal functions; well, I now beg you to show Madame d'Espard the kindness which her situation deserves. If she came here, you would listen to her?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, go and listen to her in her own house. Madame d'Espard is a sickly, nervous, delicate woman, who would faint in your rat's hole of a place. Go in the evening, instead of accepting her dinner, since the law forbids your eating or drinking at your client's expense."

"And does not the law forbid you from taking any legacy from your dead?" said Popinot, fancying that he saw a touch of irony on his nephew's lips.

"Come, uncle, if it were only to enable you to get at the truth of this business, grant my request. You will come as the examining judge, since matters do not seem to you very clear. Deuce take it! It is as necessary to cross-question the Marquise as it is to examine the Marquis."

"You are right," said the lawyer. "It is quite possible that it is she who is mad. I will go."

"I will call for you. Write down in your engagement book: 'To-morrow evening at nine, Madame d'Espard.'—Good!" said Bianchon, seeing his uncle make a note of the engagement.

Next evening at nine Bianchon mounted his uncle's dusty staircase, and found him at work on the statement of some

complicated judgment. The coat Lavienne had ordered of the tailor had not been sent, so Popinot put on his old stained coat, and was the Popinot unadorned whose appearance made those laugh who did not know the secrets of his private life. Bianchon, however, obtained permission to pull his cravat straight, and to button his coat, and he hid the stains by crossing the breast of it with the right side over the left, and so displaying the new front of the cloth. But in a minute the judge rucked the coat up over his chest by the way in which he stuffed his hands into his pockets, obeying an irresistible habit. Thus the coat, deeply wrinkled both in front and behind, made a sort of hump in the middle of the back, leaving a gap between the waistcoat and trousers through which his shirt showed. Bianchon, to his sorrow, only discovered this crowning absurdity at the moment when his uncle entered the Marquise's room.

A brief sketch of the person and the career of the lady in whose presence the doctor and the judge now found themselves is necessary for an understanding of her interview with Popinot.

Madame d'Espard had, for the last seven years, been very much the fashion in Paris, where Fashion can raise and drop by turns various personages who, now great and now small, that is to say, in view or forgotten, are at last quite intolerable—as discarded ministers are, and every kind of decayed sovereignty. These flatterers of the past, odious with their stale pretensions, know everything, speak ill of everything, and, like ruined profligates, are friends with all the world. Since her husband had separated from her in 1815, Madame d'Espard must have married in the beginning of 1812. Her children, therefore, were aged respectively fifteen and thirteen. By what luck was the mother of a family, about three-and-thirty years of age, still the fashion?

Though Fashion is capricious, and no one can foresee who shall be her favorites, though she often exalts a banker's wife, or some woman of very doubtful elegance and beauty, it certainly seems supernatural when Fashion puts on con-

stitutional airs and gives promotion for age. But in this case Fashion had done as the world did, and accepted Madame d'Espard as still young.

The Marquise, who was thirty-three by her register of birth, was twenty-two in a drawing-room in the evening. But by what care, what artifice! Elaborate curls shaded her temples. She condemned herself to live in twilight, affecting illness so as to sit under the protecting tones of light filtered through muslin. Like Diane de Poitiers, she used cold water in her bath, and, like her again, the Marquise slept on a horsehair mattress, with morocco-covered pillows to preserve her hair; she ate very little, only drank water, and observed monastic regularity in the smallest actions of her life.

This severe system has, it is said, been carried so far as to the use of ice instead of water, and nothing but cold food, by a famous Polish lady of our day who spends a life, now verging on a century old, after the fashion of a town belle. Fated to live as long as Marion Delorme, whom history has credited with surviving to be a hundred and thirty, the old vice-queen of Poland, at the age of nearly a hundred, has the heart and brain of youth, a charming face, an elegant shape; and in her conversation, sparkling with brilliancy like fagots in the fire, she can compare the men and books of our literature with the men and books of the eighteenth century. Living in Warsaw, she orders her caps of Herbault in Paris. She is a great lady with the amiability of a mere girl; she swims, she runs like a schoolboy, and can sink on to a sofa with the grace of a young coquette; she mocks at death, and laughs at life. After having astonished the Emperor Alexander, she can still amaze the Emperor Nicholas by the splendor of her entertainments. She can still bring tears to the eyes of a youthful lover, for her age is whatever she pleases, and she has the exquisite self-devotion of a *grisette*. In short, she is herself a fairy tale, unless, indeed, she is a fairy.

Had Madame d'Espard known Madame Zayonseck? Did she mean to imitate her career? Be that as it may, the Mar-

quise proved the merits of the treatment; her complexion was clear, her brow unwrinkled, her figure, like that of Henri II.'s lady-love, preserved the litheness, the freshness, the covered charms which bring a woman love and keep it alive. The simple precautions of this course, suggested by art and nature, and perhaps by experience, had met in her with a general system which confirmed the results. The Marquise was absolutely indifferent to everything that was not herself: men amused her, but no man had ever caused her those deep agitations which stir both natures to their depths, and wreck one on the other. She knew neither hatred nor love. When she was offended, she avenged herself coldly, quietly, at her leisure, waiting for the opportunity to gratify the ill-will she cherished against anybody who dwelt in her unfavorable remembrance. She made no fuss, she did not excite herself; she talked, because she knew that by two words a woman may cause the death of three men.

She had parted from M. d'Espard with the greatest satisfaction. Had he not taken with him two children who at present were troublesome, and in the future would stand in the way of her pretensions? Her most intimate friends, as much as her least persistent admirers, seeing about her none of Cornelia's jewels, who come and go, and unconsciously betray their mother's age, took her for quite a young woman. The two boys, about whom she seemed so anxious in her petition, were, like their father, as unknown in the world as the northwest passage is unknown to navigators. M. d'Espard was supposed to be an eccentric personage who had deserted his wife without having the smallest cause for complaint against her.

Mistress of herself at two-and-twenty, and mistress of her fortune of twenty-six thousand francs a year, the Marquise hesitated long before deciding on a course of action and ordering her life. Though she benefited by the expenses her husband had incurred in his house, though she had all the furniture, the carriages, the horses, in short, all the details of a handsome establishment, she lived a retired life

during the years 1816, 17, and 18, a time when families were recovering from the disasters resulting from political tempests. She belonged to one of the most important and illustrious families of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, and her parents advised her to live with them as much as possible after the separation forced upon her by her husband's inexplicable caprice.

In 1820 the Marquise roused herself from her lethargy; she went to Court, appeared at parties, and entertained in her own house. From 1821 to 1827 she lived in great style, and made herself remarked for her taste and her dress; she had a day, an hour, for receiving visits, and ere long she had seated herself on the throne occupied before her by Madame la Vicomtesse de Beauséant, the Duchesse de Langeais, and Madame Firmiani—who on her marriage with M. de Camps had resigned the sceptre in favor of the Duchesse de Maufrigneuse, from whom Madame d'Espard snatched it. The world knew nothing beyond this of the private life of the Marquise d'Espard. She seemed likely to shine for long on the Parisian horizon, like the sun near its setting, but which will never set.

The Marquise was on terms of great intimacy with a duchess as famous for her beauty as for her attachment to a prince just now in banishment, but accustomed to play a leading part in every prospective government. Madame d'Espard was also the friend of a foreign lady, with whom a famous and very wily Russian diplomat was in the habit of discussing public affairs. And then an antiquated countess, who was accustomed to shuffle the cards for the great game of politics, had adopted her in a maternal fashion. Thus, to any man of high ambitions, Madame d'Espard was preparing a covert but very real influence to follow the public and frivolous ascendency she now owed to fashion. Her drawing-room was acquiring political individuality: "What do they say at Madame d'Espard's?" "Are they against the measure in Madame d'Espard's drawing-room?" were questions repeated by a sufficient number of simpletons to

give the flock of the faithful who surrounded her the importance of a coterie. A few damaged politicians whose wounds she had bound up, and whom she flattered, pronounced her as capable in diplomacy as the wife of the Russian ambassador to London. The Marquise had indeed several times suggested to deputies or to peers words and ideas that had rung through Europe. She had often judged correctly of certain events on which her circle of friends dared not express an opinion. The principal persons about the Court came in the evening to play whist in her rooms.

Then she also had the qualities of her defects; she was thought to be—and she was—discreet. Her friendship seemed to be stanch; she worked for her protégés with a persistency which showed that she cared less for patronage than for increased influence. This conduct was based on her dominant passion: Vanity. Conquests and pleasure, which so many women love, to her seemed only means to an end; she aimed at living on every point of the largest circle that life can describe.

Among the men still young, and to whom the future belonged, who crowded her drawing-room on great occasions, were to be seen MM. de Marsay and de Ronquerolles, de Montriveau, de la Roche-Hugon, de Sérizy, Ferraud, Maxime de Trailles, de Listomère, the two Vandenesses, du Chatelet, and others. She would frequently receive a man whose wife she would not admit, and her power was great enough to induce certain ambitious men to submit to these hard conditions, such as two famous royalist bankers, M. de Nucingen and Ferdinand du Tillet. She had so thoroughly studied the strength and the weakness of Paris life that her conduct had never given any man the smallest advantage over her. An enormous price might have been set on a note or letter by which she might have compromised herself, without one being produced.

If an arid soul enabled her to play her part to the life, her person was no less available for it. She had a youthful figure. Her voice was, at will, soft and fresh, or clear and

hard. She possessed in the highest degree the secret of that aristocratic pose by which a woman wipes out the past. The Marquise knew well the art of setting an immense space between herself and the sort of man who fancies he may be familiar after some chance advances. Her imposing gaze could deny everything. In her conversation fine and beautiful sentiments and noble resolutions flowed naturally, as it seemed, from a pure heart and soul; but in reality she was all self, and quite capable of blasting a man who was clumsy in his negotiations, at the very time when she was shamelessly making a compromise for the benefit of her own interest.

Rastignac, in trying to fasten on to this woman, had discerned her to be the cleverest of tools, but he had not yet used it; far from handling it, he was already finding himself crushed by it. This young *Condottiere* of the brain, condemned, like Napoleon, to give battle constantly, while knowing that a single defeat would prove the grave of his fortunes, had met a dangerous adversary in his protectress. For the first time in his turbulent life, he was playing a game with a partner worthy of him. He saw a place as Minister in the conquest of Madame d'Espard, so he was her tool till he could make her his—a perilous beginning.

The Hotel d'Espard needed a large household, and the Marquise had a great number of servants. The grand receptions were held in the ground-floor rooms, but she lived on the first floor of the house. The perfect order of a fine staircase splendidly decorated, and rooms fitted in the dignified style which formerly prevailed at Versailles, spoke of an immense fortune. When the judge saw the carriage gates thrown open to admit his nephew's cab, he took in with a rapid glance the lodge, the porter, the courtyard, the stables, the arrangement of the house, the flowers that decorated the stairs, the perfect cleanliness of the banisters, walls, and carpets, and counted the footmen in livery who, as the bell rang, appeared on the landing. His eyes, which only yesterday in his parlor had sounded the dignity of misery under

the muddy clothing of the poor, now studied with the same penetrating vision the furniture and splendor of the rooms he passed through, to pierce to the misery of grandeur.

"M. Popinot.—M. Bianchon."

The two names were pronounced at the door of the boudoir where the Marquise was sitting, a pretty room recently refurnished, and looking out on the garden behind the house. At the moment Madame d'Espard was seated in one of the old *rococo* armchairs of which Madame had set the fashion. Rastignac was at her left hand on a low chair, in which he looked settled like an Italian lady's "cousin." A third person was standing by the corner of the chimney-piece. As the shrewd doctor had suspected, the Marquise was a woman of a parched and wiry constitution. But for her regimen her complexion must have taken the ruddy tone that is produced by constant heat; but she added to the effect of her acquired pallor by the strong colors of the stuffs she hung her rooms with, or in which she dressed. Reddish-brown, maroon, bistre with a golden light in it, suited her to perfection. Her boudoir, copied from that of a famous lady then at the height of fashion in London, was in tan-colored velvet; but she had added various details of ornament which moderated the pompous splendor of this royal hue. Her hair was dressed like a girl's in bands ending in curls, which emphasized the rather long oval of her face; but an oval face is as majestic as a round one is ignoble. The mirrors, cut with facets to lengthen or flatten the face at will, amply prove the rule as applied to the physiognomy.

On seeing Popinot, who stood in the doorway craning his neck like a startled animal, with his left hand in his pocket, and the right hand holding a hat with a greasy lining, the Marquise gave Rastignac a look where lay a germ of mockery. The good man's rather foolish appearance was so completely in harmony with his grotesque figure and scared looks that Rastignac, catching sight of Bianchon's dejected expression of humiliation through his uncle, could not help laughing, and turned away. The Marquise bowed a greeting, and

made a great effort to rise from her seat, falling back again, not without grace, with an air of apologizing for her incivility by affected weakness.

At this instant the person who was standing between the fireplace and the door bowed slightly, and pushed forward two chairs, which he offered by a gesture to the doctor and the judge; then, when they had seated themselves, he leaned against the wall again, crossing his arms.

A word as to this man. There is living now, in our day, a painter—Decamps—who possesses in the very highest degree the art of commanding your interest in everything he sets before your eyes, whether it be a stone or a man. In this respect his pencil is more skilful than his brush. He will sketch an empty room and leave a broom against the wall. If he chooses, you shall shudder; you shall believe that this broom has just been the instrument of crime, and is dripping with blood; it shall be the broom which the widow Bancal used to clean out the room where Fualdés was murdered. Yes, the painter will touzle that broom like a man in a rage; he will make each hair of it stand on end as though it were on your own bristling scalp; he will make it the interpreter between the secret poem of his imagination and the poem that shall have its birth in yours. After terrifying you by the aspect of that broom, to-morrow he will draw another, and lying by it a cat, asleep, but mysterious in its sleep, shall tell you that this broom is that on which the wife of a German cobbler rides off to the Sabbath on the Brocken. Or it will be a quite harmless broom, on which he will hang the coat of a clerk in the Treasury. Decamps had in his brush what Paganini had in his bow—a magnetically communicative power.

Well, I should have to transfer to my style that striking genius, that marvellous knack of the pencil, to depict the upright, tall, lean man dressed in black, with black hair, who stood there without speaking a word. This gentleman had a face like a knife-blade, cold and harsh, with a color like Seine water when it is muddy and strewn with frag-

ments of charcoal from a sunken barge. He looked at the floor, listening and passing judgment. His attitude was terrifying. He stood there like the dreadful broom to which Decamps has given the power of revealing a crime. Now and then, in the course of conversation, the Marquise tried to get some tacit advice; but however eager her questioning, he was as grave and as rigid as the statue of the Commendatore.

The worthy Popinot, sitting on the edge of his chair in front of the fire, his hat between his knees, stared at the gilt chandeliers, the clock, and the curiosities with which the chimney-shelf was covered, the velvet and trimmings of the curtains, and all the costly and elegant nothings that a woman of fashion collects about her. He was roused from his homely meditations by Madame d'Espard, who addressed him in a piping tone:

"Monsieur, I owe you a million thanks—"

"A million thanks," thought he to himself, "that is too many; it does not mean one."

"For the trouble you condescend—"

"Condescend!" thought he; "she is laughing at me."

"To take in coming to see an unhappy client, who is too ill to go out—"

Here the lawyer cut the Marquise short by giving her an inquisitorial look, examining the sanitary condition of the unhappy client. "As sound as a bell," said he to himself.

"Madame," said he, assuming a respectful mien, "you owe me nothing. Although my visit to you is not in strict accordance with the practice of the Court, we ought to spare no pains to discover the truth in cases of this kind. Our judgment is then guided less by the letter of the law than by the promptings of our conscience. Whether I seek the truth here or in my own consulting-room, so long as I find it, all will be well."

While Popinot was speaking, Rastignac was shaking hands with Bianchon; the Marquise welcomed the doctor with a little bow full of gracious significance.

"Who is that?" asked Bianchon in a whisper of Rastignac, indicating the dark man.

"The Chevalier d'Espard, the Marquis's brother."

"Your nephew told me," said the Marquise to Popinot, "how much you are occupied, and I know too that you are so good as to wish to conceal your kind actions, so as to release those whom you oblige from the burden of gratitude. The work in Court is most fatiguing, it would seem. Why have they not twice as many judges?"

"Ah, Madame, that would not be difficult; we should be none the worse if they had. But when that happens, fowls will cut their teeth!"

As he heard this speech, so entirely in character with the lawyer's appearance, the Chevalier measured him from head to foot, out of one eye, as much as to say, "We shall easily manage him!"

The Marquise looked at Rastignac, who bent over her. "That is the sort of man," murmured the dandy in her ear, "who is trusted to pass judgments on the life and interests of private individuals."

Like most men who have grown old in a business, Popinot readily let himself follow the habits he had acquired, more particularly habits of mind. His conversation was all of "the shop." He was fond of questioning those he talked to, forcing them to unexpected conclusions, making them tell more than they wished to reveal. Pozo di Borgo, it is said, used to amuse himself by discovering other folks' secrets, and entangling them in his diplomatic snares, and thus, by invincible habit, showed how his mind was soaked in wiliness. As soon as Popinot had surveyed the ground, so to speak, on which he stood, he saw that it would be necessary to have recourse to the cleverest subtleties, the most elaborately wrapped up and disguised, which were in use in the Courts, to detect the truth.

Bianchon sat cold and stern, as a man who has made up his mind to endure torture without revealing his sufferings; but in his heart he wished that his uncle could only

trample on this woman as we trample on a viper—a comparison suggested to him by the Marquise's long dress, by the curve of her attitude, her long neck, small head, and undulating movements.

"Well, Monsieur," said Madame d'Espard, "however great my dislike to be or seem selfish, I have been suffering too long not to wish that you may settle matters at once. Shall I soon get a favorable decision?"

"Madame, I will do my best to bring matters to a conclusion," said Popinot, with an air of frank good-nature. "Are you ignorant of the reason which made the separation necessary which now subsists between you and the Marquis d'Espard?"

"Yes, Monsieur," she replied, evidently prepared with a story to tell. "At the beginning of 1816 M. d'Espard, whose temper had completely changed within three months or so, proposed that we should go to live on one of his estates near Briançon, without any regard for my health, which that climate would have destroyed, or for my habits of life; I refused to go. My refusal gave rise to such unjustifiable reproaches on his part that from that hour I had my suspicions as to the soundness of his mind. On the following day he left me, leaving me his house and the free use of my own income, and he went to live in the Rue de la Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève, taking with him my two children—"

"One moment, Madame," said the lawyer, interrupting her. "What was that income?"

"Twenty-six thousand francs a year," she replied parenthetically. "I at once consulted old M. Bordin as to what I ought to do," she went on; "but it seems that there are so many difficulties in the way of depriving a father of the care of his children, that I was forced to resign myself to remaining alone at the age of twenty-two—an age at which many young women do very foolish things. You have read my petition, no doubt, Monsieur; you know the principal facts on which I rely to procure a Commission in Lunacy with regard to M. d'Espard?"

"Have you ever applied to him, Madame, to obtain the care of your children?"

"Yes, Monsieur; but in vain. It is very hard on a mother to be deprived of the affection of her children, particularly when they can give her such happiness as every woman clings to."

"The elder must be sixteen," said Popinot.

"Fifteen," said the Marquise eagerly.

Here Bianchon and Rastignac looked at each other. Madame d'Espard bit her lips.

"What can the age of my children matter to you?"

"Well, Madame," said the lawyer, without seeming to attach any importance to his words, "a lad of fifteen and his brother, of thirteen, I suppose, have legs and their wits about them; they might come to see you on the sly. If they do not, it is because they obey their father, and to obey him in that matter they must love him very dearly."

"I do not understand," said the Marquise.

"You do not know, perhaps," replied Popinot, "that in your petition your attorney represents your children as being very unhappy with their father?"

Madame d'Espard replied with charming innocence: "I do not know what my attorney may have put into my mouth."

"Forgive my inferences," said Popinot, "but Justice weighs everything. What I ask you, Madame, is suggested by my wish thoroughly to understand the matter. By your account M. d'Espard deserted you on the most frivolous pretext. Instead of going to Briançon, where he wished to take you, he remained in Paris. This point is not clear. Did he know this Madame Jeanrenaud before his marriage?"

"No, Monsieur," replied the Marquise, with some asperity, visible only to Rastignac and the Chevalier d'Espard.

She was offended at being cross-questioned by this lawyer when she had intended to beguile his judgment; but as Popinot still looked stupid from sheer absence of mind, she ended by attributing his interrogatory to the Questioning Spirit of Voltaire's bailiff.

"My parents," she went on, "married me at the age of sixteen to M. d'Espard, whose name, fortune, and mode of life were such as my family looked for in the man who was to be my husband. M. d'Espard was then six-and-twenty; he was a gentleman in the English sense of the word; his manners pleased me, he seemed to have plenty of ambition, and I like ambitious people," she added, looking at Rastignac. "If M. d'Espard had never met that Madame Jeanrenaud, his character, his learning, his acquirements would have raised him—as his friends then believed—to high office in the Government. King Charles X., at that time, Monsieur, had the greatest esteem for him, and a peer's seat, an appointment at Court, some important post certainly would have been his. That woman turned his head, and has ruined all the prospects of my family."

"What were M. d'Espard's religious opinions at that time?"

"He was, and is still, a very pious man."

"You do not suppose that Madame Jeanrenaud may have influenced him by mysticism?"

"No, Monsieur."

"You have a very fine house, Madame," said Popinot suddenly, taking his hands out of his pockets, and rising to pick up his coat-tails and warm himself. "This boudoir is very nice, those chairs are magnificent, the whole apartment is sumptuous. You must indeed be most unhappy when, seeing yourself here, you know that your children are ill lodged, ill clothed, and ill fed. I can imagine nothing more terrible for a mother."

"Yes, indeed. I should be so glad to give the poor little fellows some amusement, while their father keeps them at work from morning till night at that wretched history of China."

"You give handsome balls; they would enjoy them, but they might acquire a taste for dissipation. However, their father might send them to you once or twice in the course of the winter."

"He brings them here on my birthday and on New Year's Day. On those days M. d'Espard does me the favor of dining here with them."

"It is very singular behavior," said the judge, with an air of conviction. "Have you ever seen this Dame Jeanrenaud?"

"My brother-in-law one day, out of interest in his brother—"

"Ah! Monsieur is M. d'Espard's brother?" said the lawyer, interrupting her.

The Chevalier bowed, but did not speak.

"M. d'Espard, who has watched this affair, took me to the Oratoire, where this woman goes to sermon, for she is a Protestant. I saw her; she is not in the least attractive; she looks like a butcher's wife, extremely fat, horribly marked with the smallpox; she has feet and hands like a man's, she squints, in short, she is monstrous!"

"It is inconceivable," said the judge, looking like the most imbecile judge in the whole kingdom. "And this creature lives near here, Rue Verte, in a fine house? There are no plain folk left, it would seem?"

"In a mansion on which her son has spent absurd sums."

"Madame," said Popinot, "I live in the Faubourg Saint-Marceau; I know nothing of such expenses. What do you call absurd sums?"

"Well," said the Marquise, "a stable with five horses and three carriages, a phaeton, a brougham, and a cabriolet."

"That costs a large sum, then?" asked Popinot in surprise.

"Enormous sums!" said Rastignac, intervening. "Such an establishment would cost, for the stables, the keeping the carriages in order, and the liveries for the men, between fifteen and sixteen thousand francs a year."

"Should you think so, Madame?" said the judge, looking much astonished.

"Yes, at least," replied the Marquise.

"And the furniture, too, must have cost a lot of money?"

"More than a hundred thousand francs," replied Madame d'Espard, who could not help smiling at the lawyer's vulgarity.

"Judges, Madame, are apt to be incredulous; it is what they are paid for, and I am incredulous. The Baron Jean-renaud and his mother must have fleeced M. d'Espard most preposterously, if what you say is correct. There is a stable establishment which, by your account, costs sixteen thousand francs a year. Housekeeping, servants' wages, and the gross expenses of the house itself must run to twice as much; that makes a total of from fifty to sixty thousand francs a year. Do you suppose that these people, formerly so extremely poor, can have so large a fortune? A million yields scarcely forty thousand a year."

"Monsieur, the mother and son invested the money given them by M. d'Espard in the Funds when they were at 60 to 80. I should think their income must be more than sixty thousand francs. And then the son has fine appointments."

"If they spend sixty thousand francs a year," said the judge, "how much do you spend?"

"Well," said Madame d'Espard, "about the same." The Chevalier started a little, the Marquise colored; Bianchon looked at Rastignac; but Popinot preserved an expression of simplicity which quite deceived Madame d'Espard. The Chevalier took no part in the conversation; he saw that all was lost.

"These people, Madame, might be indicted before the superior Court," said Popinot.

"That was my opinion," exclaimed the Marquise, enchanted. "If threatened with the police, they would have come to terms."

"Madame," said Popinot, "when M. d'Espard left you, did he not give you a power of attorney enabling you to manage and control your own affairs?"

"I do not understand the object of all these questions," said the Marquise with petulance. "It seems to me that if you would only consider the state in which I am placed by

my husband's insanity, you ought to be troubling yourself about him, and not about me."

"We are coming to that, Madame," said the judge. "Before placing in your hands, or in any others, the control of M. d'Espard's property, supposing he were pronounced incapable, the Court must inquire as to how you have managed your own. If M. d'Espard gave you power, he would have shown confidence in you, and the Court would recognize the fact. Had you any power from him? You might have bought or sold house property or invested money in business?"

"No, Monsieur, the Blamont-Chauvrys are not in the habit of trading," said she, extremely nettled in her pride as an aristocrat, and forgetting the business in hand. "My property is intact, and M. d'Espard gave me no power to act."

The Chevalier put his hand over his eyes not to betray the vexation he felt at his sister-in-law's short-sightedness, for she was ruining herself by her answers. Popinot had gone straight to the mark in spite of his apparent doublings.

"Madame," said the lawyer, indicating the Chevalier, "this gentleman, of course, is your near connection? May we speak openly before these other gentlemen?"

"Speak on," said the Marquise, surprised at this caution.

"Well, Madame, granting that you spend only sixty thousand francs a year, to any one who sees your stables, your house, your train of servants, and a style of housekeeping which strikes me as far more luxurious than that of the Jeanrenauds, that sum would seem well laid out."

The Marquise bowed an agreement.

"But," continued the judge, "if you have no more than twenty-six thousand francs a year, you may have a hundred thousand francs of debts. The Court would therefore have a right to imagine that the motives which prompt you to ask that your husband may be deprived of the control of his property are complicated by self-interest and the need for paying your debts—if—you—have—any. The requests addressed to me have interested me in your position; consider

fully and make your confession. If my suppositions have hit the truth, there is yet time to avoid the blame which the Court would have a perfect right to express in the saving clauses of the verdict if you could not show your attitude to be absolutely honorable and clear.

"It is our duty to examine the motives of the applicant as well as to listen to the plea of the witness under examination, to ascertain whether the petitioner may not have been prompted by passion, by a desire for money, which is unfortunately too common—"

The Marquise was on Saint Laurence's gridiron.

"And I must have explanations on this point. Madame, I have no wish to call you to account; I only want to know how you have managed to live at the rate of sixty thousand francs a year, and that for some years past. There are plenty of women who achieve this in their housekeeping, but you are not one of those. Tell me, you may have the most legitimate resources, a royal pension, or some claim on the indemnities lately granted; but even then you must have had your husband's authority to receive them."

The Marquise did not speak.

"You must remember," Popinot went on, "that M. d'Espard may wish to enter a protest, and his counsel will have a right to find out whether you have any creditors. This boudoir is newly furnished, your rooms are not now furnished with the things left to you by M. d'Espard in 1816. If, as you did me the honor of informing me, furniture is costly for the Jeanrenauds, it must be yet more so for you, who are a great lady. Though I am a judge, I am but a man; I may be wrong—tell me so. Remember the duties imposed on me by the law, and the rigorous inquiries it demands, when the case before it is the suspension from all his functions of the father of a family in the prime of life. So you will pardon me, Madame la Marquise, for laying all these difficulties before you; it will be easy for you to give me an explanation.

"When a man is pronounced incapable of the control of

his own affairs, a trustee has to be appointed. Who will be the trustee?"

"His brother," said the Marquise.

The Chevalier bowed. There was a short silence, very uncomfortable for the five persons who were present. The judge, in sport as it were, had laid open the woman's sore place. Popinot's countenance of common, clumsy good-nature, at which the Marquise, the Chevalier, and Rastignac had been inclined to laugh, had gained importance in their eyes. As they stole a look at him, they discerned the various expressions of that eloquent mouth. The ridiculous mortal was a judge of acumen. His studious notice of the boudoir was accounted for: he had started from the gilt elephant supporting the chimney-clock, examining all this luxury, and had ended by reading this woman's soul.

"If the Marquis d'Espard is mad about China, I see that you are not less fond of its products," said Popinot, looking at the porcelain on the chimney-piece. "But perhaps it was from M. le Marquis that you had these charming Oriental pieces," and he pointed to some precious trifles.

This irony, in very good taste, made Bianchon smile, and petrified Rastignac, while the Marquise bit her thin lips.

"Instead of being the protector of a woman placed in a cruel dilemma—an alternative between losing her fortune and her children, and being regarded as her husband's enemy," she said, "you accuse me, Monsieur! You suspect my motives! You must own that your conduct is strange!"

"Madame," said the judge eagerly, "the caution exercised by the Court in such cases as these might have given you, in any other judge, a perhaps less indulgent critic than I am. —And do you suppose that M. d'Espard's lawyer will show you any great consideration? Will he not be suspicious of motives which may be perfectly pure and disinterested? Your life will be at his mercy; he will inquire into it without qualifying his search by the respectful deference I have for you."

"I am much obliged to you, Monsieur," said the Mar-

quise satirically. "Admitting for the moment that I owe thirty thousand, or fifty thousand francs, in the first place, it would be a mere trifle to the d'Espards and the de Blamont-Chauvrys. But if my husband is not in the possession of his mental faculties, would that prevent his being pronounced incapable?"

"No, Madame," said Popinot.

"Although you have questioned me with a sort of cunning which I should not have expected in a judge, and under circumstances where straightforwardness would have answered your purpose," she went on, "I will tell you without subterfuge that my position in the world, and the efforts I have to make to keep up my connection, are not in the least to my taste. I began my life by a long period of solitude; but my children's interest appealed to me; I felt that I must fill their father's place. By receiving my friends, by keeping up all this connection, by contracting these debts, I have secured their future welfare; I have prepared for them a brilliant career where they will find help and favor; and to have what has thus been acquired, many a man of business, lawyer or banker, would gladly pay all it has cost me."

"I appreciate your devoted conduct, Madame," replied Popinot. "It does you honor, and I blame you for nothing. A judge belongs to all: he must know and weigh every fact."

Madame d'Espard's tact and practice in estimating men made her understand that M. Popinot was not to be influenced by any consideration. She had counted on an ambitious lawyer, she had found a man of conscience. She at once thought of finding other means for securing the success of her side.

The servants brought in tea.

"Have you any further explanations to give me, Madame?" said Popinot, seeing these preparations.

"Monsieur," she replied haughtily, "do your business your own way; question M. d'Espard, and you will pity me, I am sure." She raised her head, looking Popinot in the

face with pride, mingled with impertinence; the worthy man bowed himself out respectfully.

"A nice man is your uncle," said Rastignac to Bianchon. "Is he really so dense? Does not he know what the Marquise d'Espard is, what her influence means, her unavowed power over people? The Keeper of the Seals will be with her to-morrow—"

"My dear fellow, how can I help it?" said Bianchon. "Did not I warn you? He is not a man you can get over."

"No," said Rastignac; "he is a man you must run over."

The doctor was obliged to make his bow to the Marquise and her mute Chevalier to catch up Popinot, who, not being the man to endure an embarrassing position, was pacing through the rooms.

"That woman owes a hundred thousand crowns," said the judge, as he stepped into his nephew's cab.

"And what do you think of the case?"

"I," said the judge. "I never have an opinion till I have gone into everything. To-morrow early I will send to Madame Jeanrenaud to call on me in my private office at four o'clock, to make her explain the facts which concern her, for she is compromised."

"I should very much like to know what the end will be."

"Why, bless me, do not you see that the Marquise is the tool of that tall lean man who never uttered a word? There is a strain of Cain in him, but of the Cain who goes to the Law Courts for his bludgeon, and there, unluckily for him, we keep more than one Damocles' sword."

"Oh, Rastignac! what brought you into that boat, I wonder?" exclaimed Bianchon.

"Ah, we are used to seeing these little family conspiracies," said Popinot. "Not a year passes without a number of verdicts of 'insufficient evidence' against applications of this kind. In our state of society such an attempt brings no dishonor, while we send a poor devil to the galleys if he breaks a pane of glass dividing him from a bowl full of gold. Our Code is not faultless."

"But these are the facts?"

"My boy, do you not know all the judicial romances with which clients impose on their attorneys? If the attorneys condemned themselves to state nothing but the truth, they would not earn enough to keep their office open."

Next day, at four in the afternoon, a very stout dame, looking a good deal like a cask dressed up in a gown and belt, mounted Judge Popinot's stairs, perspiring and panting. She had, with great difficulty, got out of a green landau, which suited her to a miracle; you could not think of the woman without the landau, or the landau without the woman.

"It is I, my dear sir," said she, appearing in the doorway of the judge's room. "Madame Jeanrenaud, whom you summoned exactly as if I were a thief, neither more nor less."

The common words were spoken in a common voice, broken by the wheezing of asthma, and ending in a cough.

"When I go through a damp place, I can't tell you what I suffer, sir. I shall never make old bones, saving your presence. However, here I am."

The lawyer was quite amazed at the appearance of this supposed Maréchale d'Ancre. Madame Jeanrenaud's face was pitted with an infinite number of little holes, was very red, with a pug nose and a low forehead, and was as round as a ball; for everything about the good woman was round. She had the bright eyes of a country woman, an honest gaze, a cheerful tone, and chestnut hair held in place by a bonnet cap under a green bonnet decked with a shabby bunch of auriculas. Her stupendous bust was a thing to laugh at, for it made one fear some grotesque explosion every time she coughed. Her enormous legs were of the shape which make the Paris street boy describe such a woman as being built on piles. The widow wore a green gown trimmed with chinchilla, which looked on her as a splash of dirty oil would look on a bride's veil. In short, everything about her harmonized with her last words: "Here I am."

"Madame," said Popinot, "you are suspected of having used some seductive arts to induce M. d'Espard to hand over to you very considerable sums of money."

"Of what! of what!" cried she. "Of seductive arts? But, my dear sir, you are a man to be respected, and, moreover, as a lawyer you ought to have some good sense. Look at me! Tell me if I am likely to seduce any one. I cannot tie my own shoes, nor even stoop. For these twenty years past, the Lord be praised, I have not dared to put on a pair of stays under pain of sudden death. I was as thin as an asparagus stalk when I was seventeen, and pretty too—I may say so now. So I married Jeanrenaud, a good fellow, and head-man on the salt-barges. I had my boy, who is a fine young man; he is my pride, and it is not holding myself cheap to say he is my best piece of work. My little Jeanrenaud was a soldier who did Napoleon credit, and who served in the Imperial Guard. But, alas! at the death of my old man, who was drowned, times changed for the worse. I had the smallpox. I was kept two years in my room without stirring, and I came out of it the size you see me, hideous forever, and as wretched as could be. These are my seductive arts."

"But what, then, can the reasons be that have induced M. d'Espard to give you sums—?"

"Hugious sums, Monsieur, say the word; I do not mind. But as to his reasons, I am not at liberty to explain them."

"You are wrong. At this moment, his family, very naturally alarmed, are about to bring an action—"

"Heavens above us!" said the good woman, starting up. "Is it possible that he should be worried on my account? That king of men, a man that has not his match! Rather than he should have the smallest trouble, or a hair less on his head I could almost say, we would return every sou, Monsieur. Write that down on your papers. Heaven above us! I will go at once and tell Jeanrenaud what is going on! A pretty thing indeed!"

And the little old woman went out, rolled herself downstairs, and disappeared.

"That one tells no lies," said Popinot to himself. "Well, to-morrow I shall know the whole story, for I shall go to see the Marquis d'Espard."

People who have outlived the age when a man wastes his vitality at random, know how great an influence may be exercised on more important events by apparently trivial incidents, and will not be surprised at the weight here given to the following minor fact. Next day Popinot had an attack of coryza, a complaint which is not dangerous, and generally known by the absurd and inadequate name of a cold in the head.

The judge, who could not suppose that the delay could be serious, feeling himself a little feverish, kept his room, and did not go to see the Marquis d'Espard. This day lost was, to this affair, what on the Day of Dupes the cup of soup had been, taken by Marie de Medici, which, by delaying her meeting with Louis XIII., enabled Richelieu to arrive at Saint-Germain before her, and recapture his royal slave.

Before accompanying the lawyer and his registering clerk to the Marquis d'Espard's house, it may be as well to glance at the home and the private affairs of this father of sons whom his wife's petition represented to be a madman.

Here and there in the old parts of Paris a few buildings may still be seen in which the archæologist can discern an intention of decorating the city, and that love of property which leads the owner to give a durable character to the structure. The house in which M. d'Espard was then living, in the Rue de la Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève, was one of these old mansions, built in stone, and not devoid of a certain richness of style; but time had blackened the stone, and revolutions in the town had damaged it both outside and inside. The dignitaries who formerly dwelt in the neighborhood of the University having disappeared with the great ecclesiastical foundations, this house had become the home of industries and of inhabitants whom it was never destined

to shelter. During the last century a printing establishment had worn down the polished floors, soiled the carved wood, blackened the walls, and altered the principal internal arrangements. Formerly the residence of a Cardinal, this fine house was now divided among plebeian tenants. The character of the architecture showed that it had been built under the reigns of Henri III., Henri IV., and Louis XIII., at the time when the hotels Mignon and Serpente were erected in the same neighborhood, with the palace of the Princess Palatine, and the Sorbonne. An old man could remember having heard it called, in the last century, the Hotel Duperron, so it seemed probable that the illustrious Cardinal of that name had built, or perhaps merely lived in it.

There still exists, indeed, in the corner of the courtyard, a *perron* or flight of several outer steps by which the house is entered; and the way into the garden on the garden front is down a similar flight of steps. In spite of dilapidations, the luxury lavished by the architect on the balustrade and entrance porch crowning these two *perrons* suggests the simple-minded purpose of commemorating the owner's name, a sort of sculptured pun which our ancestors often allowed themselves. Finally, in support of this evidence, archæologists can still discern in the medallions which show on the principal front some traces of the cords of the Roman hat.

M. le Marquis d'Espard lived on the ground floor, in order, no doubt, to enjoy the garden, which might be called spacious for that neighborhood, and which lay open to the south, two advantages imperatively necessary for his children's health. The situation of the house, in a street on a steep hill, as its name indicates, secured these ground-floor rooms against ever being damp. M. d'Espard had taken them, no doubt, for a very moderate price, rents being low at the time when he settled in that quarter, in order to be among the schools and to superintend his boys' education. Moreover, the state in which he found the place, with everything to repair, had no doubt induced the owner to be ac-

commodating. Thus M. d'Espard had been able to go to some expense to settle himself suitably without being accused of extravagance. The loftiness of the rooms, the panelling, of which nothing survived but the frames, the decoration of the ceilings, all displayed the dignity which the prelacy stamped on whatever it attempted or created, and which artists discern to this day in the smallest relic that remains, though it be but a book, a dress, the panel of a bookcase, or an armchair.

The Marquis had the rooms painted in the rich brown tones beloved of the Dutch and of the citizens of Old Paris, hues which lend such good effects to the painter of *genre*. The panels were hung with plain paper in harmony with the paint. The window curtains were of inexpensive materials, but chosen so as to produce a generally happy result; the furniture was not too crowded and judiciously placed. Any one on going into this home could not resist a sense of sweet peacefulness, produced by the perfect calm, the stillness which prevailed, by the unpretentious unity of color, the keeping of the picture, in the words a painter might use. A certain nobleness in the details, the exquisite cleanliness of the furniture, and a perfect concord of men and things, all brought the word "suavity" to the lips.

Few persons were admitted to the rooms used by the Marquis and his two sons, whose life might perhaps seem mysterious to their neighbors. In a wing toward the street, on the third floor, there are three large rooms which had been left in the state of dilapidation and grotesque bareness to which they had been reduced by the printing works. These three rooms, devoted to the evolution of the "Picturesque History of China," were contrived to serve as a writing-room, a depository, and a private room, where M. d'Espard sat during part of the day; for after breakfast till four in the afternoon the Marquis remained in this room on the third floor to work at the publication he had undertaken. Visitors wanting to see him commonly found him there, and often the two boys on their return from school resorted

thither. Thus the ground-floor rooms were a sort of sanctuary where the father and sons spent their time from the hour of dinner till the next day, and his domestic life was carefully closed against the public eye.

His only servants were a cook—an old woman who had long been attached to his family—and a manservant forty years old, who was with him when he married Mademoiselle de Blamont. His children's nurse had also remained with them, and the minute care to which the apartment bore witness revealed the sense of order and the maternal affection expended by this woman in her master's interest, in the management of his house, and the charge of his children. These three good souls, grave and uncommunicative folk, seemed to have entered into the idea which ruled the Marquis's domestic life. And the contrast between their habits and those of most servants was a peculiarity which cast an air of mystery over the house, and fomented the calumny to which M. d'Espard himself lent occasion. Very laudable motives had made him determine never to be on visiting terms with any of the other tenants in the house. In undertaking to educate his boys he wished to keep them from all contact with strangers. Perhaps, too, he wished to avoid the intrusion of neighbors.

In a man of his rank, at a time when the Quartier Latin was distracted by Liberalism, such conduct was sure to rouse in opposition a host of petty passions, of feelings whose folly is only to be measured by their meanness, the outcome of porters' gossip and malevolent tattle from door to door, all unknown to M. d'Espard and his retainers. His manservant was stigmatized as a Jesuit, his cook as a sly fox; the nurse was in collusion with Madame Jeanrenaud to rob the madman. The madman was the Marquis. By degrees the other tenants came to regard as proofs of madness a number of things they had noticed in M. d'Espard, and passed through the sieve of their judgment without discerning any reasonable motive for them.

Having no belief in the success of the "History of China,"

they had managed to convince the landlord of the house that M. d'Espard had no money just at a time when, with the forgetfulness which often befalls busy men, he had allowed the tax-collector to send him a summons for non-payment of arrears. The landlord had forthwith claimed his quarter's rent from January 1st by sending in a receipt, which the porter's wife had amused herself by detaining. On the 15th a summons to pay was served on M. d'Espard, the portress had delivered it at her leisure, and he supposed it to be some misunderstanding, not conceiving of any incivility from a man in whose house he had been living for twelve years. The Marquis was actually seized by a bailiff at the time when his manservant had gone to carry the money for the rent to the landlord.

This arrest, insidiously reported to the persons with whom he was in treaty for his undertaking, had alarmed some of them who were already doubtful of M. d'Espard's solvency in consequence of the enormous sums which Baron Jeanrenaud and his mother were said to be receiving from him. And, indeed, these suspicions on the part of the tenants, the creditors, and the landlord had some excuse in the Marquis's extreme economy in housekeeping. He conducted it as a ruined man might. His servants always paid in ready money for the most trifling necessaries of life, and acted as not choosing to take credit; if now they had asked for anything on credit, it would probably have been refused, calumnious gossip had been so widely believed in the neighborhood. There are tradesmen who like those of their customers who pay badly when they see them often, while they hate others, and very good ones, who hold themselves on too high a level to allow of any familiarity as *chums*, a vulgar but expressive word. Men are made so; in almost every class they will allow to a gossip, or a vulgar soul that flatters them, facilities and favors they refuse to the superiority they resent, in whatever form it may show itself. The shopkeeper who rails at the Court has his courtiers.

In short, the manners of the Marquis and his children

were certain to arouse ill-feeling in their neighbors, and to work them up by degrees to the pitch of malevolence when men do not hesitate at an act of meanness if only it may damage the adversary they have themselves created.

M. d'Espard was a gentleman, as his wife was a lady, by birth and breeding; noble types, already so rare in France that the observer can easily count the persons who perfectly realize them. These two characters are based on primitive ideas, on beliefs that may be called innate, on habits formed in infancy, and which have ceased to exist. To believe in pure blood, in a privileged race, to stand in thought above other men, must we not from birth have measured the distance which divides patricians from the mob? To command, must we not have never met our equal? And finally, must not education inculcate the ideas with which Nature inspires those great men on whose brow she has placed a crown before their mother has ever set a kiss there? These ideas, this education, are no longer possible in France, where for forty years past chance has arrogated the right of making noblemen by dipping them in the blood of battles, by gilding them with glory, by crowning them with the halo of genius; where the abolition of entail and of eldest sonship, by frittering away estates, compels the nobleman to attend to his own business instead of attending to affairs of state, and where personal greatness can only be such greatness as is acquired by long and patient toil: quite a new era.

Regarded as a relic of that great institution known as feudalism, M. d'Espard deserved respectful admiration. If he believed himself to be by blood the superior of other men, he also believed in all the obligations of nobility; he had the virtues and the strength it demands. He had brought up his children in his own principles, and taught them from the cradle the religion of their caste. A deep sense of their own dignity, pride of name, the conviction that they were by birth great, gave rise in them to a kingly pride, the courage of knights, and the protecting kindness of a baronial lord; their manners, harmonizing with their

notions, would have become princes, and offended all the world of the Rue de la Montagne-Sainte-Geneviève—a world, above all others, of equality, where every one believed that M. d'Espard was ruined, and where all, from the lowest to the highest, refused the privileges of nobility to a nobleman without money, because they all were ready to allow an enriched bourgeois to usurp them. Thus the lack of communion between this family and other persons was as much moral as it was physical.

In the father and the children alike, their personality harmonized with the spirit within. M. d'Espard, at this time about fifty, might have sat as a model to represent the aristocracy of birth in the nineteenth century. He was slight and fair; there was in the outline and general expression of his face a native distinction which spoke of lofty sentiments, but it bore the impress of a deliberate coldness which commanded respect a little too decidedly. His aquiline nose bent at the tip from left to right, a slight crookedness which was not devoid of grace; his blue eyes, his high forehead, prominent enough at the brows to form a thick ridge that checked the light and shaded his eyes, all indicated a spirit of rectitude, capable of perseverance and perfect loyalty, while it gave a singular look to his countenance. This pent-house forehead might, in fact, hint at a touch of madness, and his thick-knitted eyebrows added to the apparent eccentricity. He had the white well-kept hands of a gentleman; his foot was high and narrow. His hesitating speech—not merely as to his pronunciation, which was that of a stammerer, but also in the expression of his ideas, his thought, and language—produced on the mind of the hearer the impression of a man who, in familiar phraseology, comes and goes, feels his way, tries everything, breaks off his gestures, and finishes nothing. This defect was purely superficial, and in contrast with the decisiveness of a firmly-set mouth, and the strongly-marked character of his physiognomy. His rather jerky gait matched his mode of speech. These peculiarities helped to affirm his supposed insanity.

In spite of his elegant appearance, he was systematically parsimonious in his personal expenses, and wore the same black frock-coat for three or four years, brushed with extreme care by his old manservant.

As to the children, they both were handsome, and endowed with a grace which did not exclude an expression of aristocratic disdain. They had the bright coloring, the clear eye, the transparent flesh which reveal habits of purity, regularity of life, and a due proportion of work and play. They both had black hair and blue eyes, and a twist in their nose, like their father; but their mother, perhaps, had transmitted to them the dignity of speech, of look and mien, which are hereditary in the Blamont-Chauvrys. Their voices, as clear as crystal, had an emotional quality, the softness which proves so seductive; they had, in short, the voice a woman would willingly listen to after feeling the flame of their looks. But, above all, they had the modesty of pride, a chaste reserve, a *touch-me-not* which at a maturer age might have seemed intentional coyness, so much did their demeanor inspire a wish to know them. The elder, Comte Clément de Nègrepelisse, was close upon his sixteenth year. For the last two years he had ceased to wear the pretty English round jacket which his brother, Vicomte Camille d'Espard, still wore. The Count, who for the last six months went no more to the Collège Henri IV., was dressed in the style of a young man enjoying the first pleasures of fashion. His father had not wished to condemn him to a year's useless study of philosophy; he was trying to give his knowledge some consistency by the study of transcendental mathematics. At the same time, the Marquis was having him taught Eastern languages, the international law of Europe, heraldry, and history from the original sources—charters, early documents and collections of edicts. Camille had lately begun to study rhetoric.

The day when Popinot arranged to go to question M. d'Espard was a Thursday, a holiday. At about nine in the morning, before their father was awake, the brothers were

playing in the garden. Clément was finding it hard to refuse his brother, who was anxious to go to the shooting gallery for the first time, and who begged him to second his request to the Marquis. The Viscount always rather took advantage of his weakness, and was very fond of wrestling with his brother. So the couple were quarrelling and fighting in play like schoolboys. As they ran in the garden, chasing each other, they made so much noise as to wake their father, who came to the window without their perceiving him in the heat of the fray. The Marquis amused himself with watching his two children twisted together like snakes, their faces flushed by the exertion of their strength; their complexion was rose and white, their eyes flashed sparks, their limbs writhed like cords in the fire; they fell, sprang up again, and caught each other like athletes in a circus, affording their father one of those moments of happiness which would make amends for the keenest anxieties of a busy life. Two other persons, one on the second and one on the first floor, were also looking into the garden, and saying that the old madman was amusing himself by making his children fight. Immediately a number of heads appeared at the windows; the Marquis, noticing them, called a word to his sons, who at once climbed up to the window and jumped into his room, and Clément obtained the permission asked by Camille.

All through the house every one was talking of the Marquis's new form of insanity. When Popinot arrived at about twelve o'clock, accompanied by his clerk, the portress, when he asked for M. d'Espard, conducted him to the third floor, telling him "as how M. d'Espard, no longer ago than that very morning, had set on his two children to fight, and laughed like the monster he was on seeing the younger biting the elder till he bled, and as how no doubt he longed to see them kill each other.—Don't ask me the reason why," she added; "he doesn't know himself!"

Just as the woman spoke these decisive words, she had brought the judge to the landing on the third floor, face to face with a door covered with notices announcing the succes-

sive numbers of the "Picturesque History of China." The muddy floor, the dirty banisters, the door where the printers had left their marks, the dilapidated window, and the ceiling on which the apprentices had amused themselves with drawing monstrosities with the smoky flare of their tallow dips, the piles of paper and litter heaped up in the corners, intentionally or from sheer neglect—in short, every detail of the picture lying before his eyes agreed so well with the facts alleged by the Marquise that the judge, in spite of his impartiality, could not help believing them.

"There you are, gentlemen," said the porter's wife; "there is the manifactor, where the Chinese swallow up enough to feed the whole neighborhood."

The clerk looked at the judge with a smile, and Popinot found it hard to keep his countenance. They went together into the outer room, where sat an old man, who, no doubt, performed the functions of office clerk, shopman, and cashier. This old man was the Maître Jacques of China. Along the walls ran long shelves, on which the published numbers lay in piles. A partition in wood, with a grating lined with green curtains, cut off the end of the room, forming a private office. A till with a slit to admit or disgorge crown pieces indicated the cash-desk.

"M. d'Espard?" said Popinot, addressing the man, who wore a gray blouse.

The shopman opened the door into the next room, where the lawyer and his companion saw a venerable old man, white-headed and simply dressed, wearing the Cross of Saint-Louis, seated at a desk. He ceased comparing some sheets of colored prints to look up at the two visitors. This room was an unpretentious office, full of books and proof-sheets. There was a black wood table at which some one, at the moment absent, no doubt was accustomed to work.

"The Marquis d'Espard?" said Popinot.

"No, Monsieur," said the old man, rising; "what do you want with him?" he added, coming forward, and showing

by his demeanor the dignified manners and habits due to a gentlemanly education.

"We wish to speak to him on business exclusively personal to himself," replied Popinot.

"D'Espard, here are some gentlemen who want to see you," then said the old man, going into the furthest room, where the Marquis was sitting by the fire reading the newspaper.

This innermost room had a shabby carpet, the windows were hung with gray holland curtains; the furniture consisted of a few mahogany chairs, two armchairs, a desk with a revolving front, an ordinary office table, and, on the chimney-shelf, a dingy clock and two old candlesticks. The old man led the way for Popinot and his registrar, and pulled forward two chairs, as though he were master of the place; M. d'Espard left it to him. After the preliminary civilities, during which the judge watched the supposed lunatic, the Marquis naturally asked what was the object of this visit. On this Popinot glanced significantly at the old gentleman and the Marquis.

"I believe, Monsieur le Marquis," said he, "that the character of my functions, and the inquiry that has brought me here, make it desirable that we should be alone, though it is understood by law that in such cases the inquiries have a sort of family publicity. I am judge on the Inferior Court of Appeal for the Department of the Seine, and charged by the President with the duty of examining you as to certain facts set forth in a petition for a Commission in Lunacy on the part of the Marquise d'Espard."

The old man withdrew. When the lawyer and the Marquis were alone, the clerk shut the door, and seated himself unceremoniously at the office table, where he laid out his papers and prepared to take down his notes. Popinot had still kept his eye on M. d'Espard; he was watching the effect on him of this crude statement, so painful for a man in full possession of his reason. The Marquis d'Espard, whose face was usually pale, as are those of fair men, suddenly turned

scarlet with anger; he trembled for an instant, sat down, laid his paper on the chimney-piece, and looked down. In a moment he had recovered his gentlemanly dignity, and looked steadily at the judge, as if to read in his countenance the indications of his character.

"How is it, Monsieur," he asked, "that I have had no notice of such a petition?"

"Monsieur le Marquis, persons on whom such a commission is held, not being supposed to have the use of their reason, any notice of the petition is unnecessary. The duty of the Court chiefly consists in verifying the allegations of the petitioner."

"Nothing can be fairer," replied the Marquis. "Well, then, Monsieur, be so good as to tell me what I ought to do—"

"You have only to answer my questions, omitting nothing. However delicate the reasons may be which may have led you to act in such a manner as to give Madame d'Espard a pretext for her petition, speak without fear. It is unnecessary to assure you that lawyers know their duties, and that in such cases the profoundest secrecy—"

"Monsieur," said the Marquis, whose face expressed the sincerest pain, "if my explanations should lead to any blame being attached to Madame d'Espard's conduct, what will be the result?"

"The Court may add its censure to its reasons for its decision."

"Is such censure optional? If I were to stipulate with you, before replying, that nothing should be said that could annoy Madame d'Espard in the event of your report being in my favor, would the Court take my request into consideration?"

The judge looked at the Marquis, and the two men exchanged sentiments of equal magnanimity.

"Noël," said Popinot to his registrar, "go into the other room. If you can be of use, I will call you in.—If, as I am inclined to think," he went on, speaking to the Marquis when the clerk had gone out, "I find that there is some mis-

understanding in this case, I can promise you, Monsieur, that on your application the Court will act with due courtesy.

"There is a leading fact put forward by Madame d'Espard, the most serious of all, of which I must beg for an explanation," said the judge after a pause. "It refers to the dissipation of your fortune to the advantage of a certain Madame Jeanrenaud, the widow of a barge-master—or rather, to that of her son, Colonel Jeanrenaud, for whom you are said to have procured an appointment, to have exhausted your influence with the King, and at last to have extended such protection as secures him a good marriage. The petition suggests that such a friendship is more devoted than any feelings, even those which morality must disapprove—"

A sudden flush crimsoned the Marquis's face and forehead, tears even started to his eyes, for his eyelashes were wet, then wholesome pride crushed the emotions, which in a man are accounted a weakness.

"To tell you the truth, Monsieur," said the Marquis, in a broken voice, "you place me in a strange dilemma. The motives of my conduct were to have died with me. To reveal them I must disclose to you some secret wounds, must place the honor of my family in your keeping, and must speak of myself, a delicate matter, as you will fully understand. I hope, Monsieur, that it will all remain a secret between us. You will, no doubt, be able to find in the formulas of the law one which will allow of judgment being pronounced without any betrayal of my confidences."

"So far as that goes, it is perfectly possible, Monsieur le Marquis."

"Some time after my marriage," said M. d'Espard, "my wife having run into considerable expenses, I was obliged to have recourse to borrowing. You know what was the position of noble families during the Revolution; I had not been able to keep a steward or a man of business. Nowadays gentlemen are for the most part obliged to manage their affairs themselves. Most of my title-deeds had been brought to Paris, from Languedoc, Provence, or le Comtat, by my

father, who dreaded, and not without reason, the inquisition which family title-deeds, and what were then styled the 'parchments' of the privileged class, brought down on the owners.

"Our name is Nègrepelisse; d'Espard is a title acquired in the time of Henri IV. by a marriage which brought us the estates and titles of the house of d'Espard, on condition of our bearing an escutcheon of pretence on our coat-of-arms, those of the house of d'Espard, an old family of Béarn, connected in the female line with that of Albret: quarterly, paly of or and sable; and azure two griffins' claws armed, gules in saltire, with the famous motto *Des partem leonis*. At the time of this alliance we lost Nègrepelisse, a little town which was as famous during the religious struggles as was my ancestor who then bore the name. Captain de Nègrepelisse was ruined by the burning of all his property, for the Protestants did not spare a friend of Montluc's.

"The Crown was unjust to M. de Nègrepelisse; he received neither a marshal's bâton, nor a post as governor, nor any indemnity; King Charles IX., who was fond of him, died without being able to reward him; Henri IV. arranged his marriage with Mademoiselle d'Espard, and secured him the estates of that house, but all those of the Nègrepelisses had already passed into the hands of his creditors.

"My great-grandfather, the Marquis d'Espard, was, like me, placed early in life at the head of his family by the death of his father, who, after dissipating his wife's fortune, left his son nothing but the entailed estates of the d'Espards, burdened with a jointure. The young Marquis was all the more straitened for money because he held a post at Court. Being in great favor with Louis XIV., the King's good will brought him a fortune. But here, Monsieur, a blot stained our escutcheon, an unconfessed and horrible stain of blood and disgrace which I am making it my business to wipe out. I discovered the secret among the deeds relating to the estate of Nègrepelisse and the packets of letters."

At this solemn moment the Marquis spoke without hesi-

tation or any of the repetition habitual with him; but it is a matter of common observation that persons who, in ordinary life, are afflicted with these two defects, are freed from them as soon as any passionate emotion underlies their speech.

"The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes was decreed," he went on. "You are no doubt aware, Monsieur, that this was an opportunity for many favorites to make their fortunes. Louis XIV. bestowed on the magnates about his Court the confiscated lands of those Protestant families who did not take the prescribed steps for the sale of their property. Some persons in high favor went 'Protestant-hunting,' as the phrase was. I have ascertained beyond a doubt that the fortune enjoyed to this day by two ducal families is derived from lands seized from hapless merchants.

"I will not attempt to explain to you, a man of law, all the manœuvres employed to entrap the refugees who had large fortunes to carry away. It is enough to say that the lands of Nègrepelisse, comprising twenty-two churches and rights over the town, and those of Gravenges which had formerly belonged to us, were at that time in the hands of a Protestant family. My grandfather recovered them by gift from Louis XIV. This gift was effected by documents hall-marked by atrocious iniquity. The owner of these two estates, thinking he would be able to return, had gone through the form of a sale, and was going to Switzerland to join his family, whom he had sent in advance. He wished, no doubt, to take advantage of every delay granted by the law, so as to settle the concerns of his business.

"This man was arrested by order of the governor, the trustee confessed the truth, the poor merchant was hanged, and my ancestor had the two estates. I would gladly have been able to ignore the share he took in the plot; but the governor was his uncle on the mother's side, and I have unfortunately read the letter in which he begged him to apply to Deodatus, the name agreed upon by the Court to designate the King. In this letter there is a tone of jocosity with reference to the victim which filled me with horror. In the

end, the sums of money sent by the refugee family to ransom the poor man's life were kept by the governor, who despatched the merchant all the same."

The Marquis paused, as though the memory of it were still too heavy for him to bear.

"This unfortunate family was named Jeanrenaud," he went on. "That name is enough to account for my conduct. I could never think without keen pain of the secret disgrace that weighed on my family. That fortune enabled my grandfather to marry a demoiselle de Navarreins-Lansac, heiress to the younger branch of that house, who were at that time much richer than the elder branch of the Navarreins. My father thus became one of the largest landowners in the kingdom. He was able to marry my mother, a Grandlieu of the younger branch. Though ill-gotten, this property has been singularly profitable.

"For my part, being determined to remedy the mischief, I wrote to Switzerland, and knew no peace till I was on the traces of the Protestant victim's heirs. At last I discovered that the Jeanrenauds, reduced to abject want, had left Fribourg and returned to live in France. Finally, I found in M. Jeanrenaud, lieutenant in a cavalry regiment under Napoleon, the sole heir of this unhappy family. In my eyes, Monsieur, the rights of the Jeanrenauds were clear. To establish a prescriptive right is it not necessary that there should have been some possibility of proceeding against those who are in the enjoyment of it? To whom could these refugees have appealed? Their Court of Justice was on high, or rather, Monsieur, it was here," and the Marquis struck his hand on his heart. "I did not choose that my children should be able to think of me as I have thought of my father and of my ancestors. I aim at leaving them an unblemished inheritance and escutcheon. I did not choose that nobility should be a lie in my person. And, after all, politically speaking, ought those *émigrés* who are now appealing against revolutionary confiscations to keep the property derived from antecedent confiscations by positive crimes?

"I found in M. Jeanrenaud and his mother the most perverse honesty; to hear them you would suppose that they were robbing me. In spite of all I could say, they will accept no more than the value of the lands at the time when the King bestowed them on my family. The price was settled between us at the sum of eleven hundred thousand francs, which I was to pay at my convenience and without interest. To achieve this I had to forego my income for a long time. And then, Monsieur, began the destruction of some illusions I had allowed myself as to Madame d'Espard's character. When I proposed to her that we should leave Paris and go into the country, where we could live respected on half of her income, and so more rapidly complete a restitution of which I spoke to her without going into the more serious details, Madame d'Espard treated me as a madman. I then understood my wife's real character. She would have approved of my grandfather's conduct without a scruple, and have laughed at the Huguenots. Terrified by her coldness, and her little affection for her children, whom she abandoned to me without a regret, I determined to leave her the command of her fortune, after paying our common debts. It was no business of hers, as she told me, to pay for my follies. As I then had not enough to live on and pay for my sons' education, I determined to educate them myself, to make them gentlemen and men of feeling. By investing my money in the Funds I have been enabled to pay off my obligation sooner than I had dared to hope, for I took advantage of the opportunities afforded by the improvement in prices. If I had kept four thousand francs a year for my boys and myself, I could only have paid off twenty thousand crowns a year, and it would have taken almost eighteen years to achieve my freedom. As it is, I have lately repaid the whole of the eleven hundred thousand francs that were due. Thus I enjoy the happiness of having made this restitution without doing my children the smallest wrong.

"These, Monsieur, are the reasons for the payments made to Madame Jeanrenaud and her son."

"So Madame d'Espard knew the motives of your retirement?" said the judge, controlling the emotion he felt at this narrative.

"Yes, Monsieur."

Popinot gave an expressive shrug; he rose and opened the door into the next room.

"Noël, you can go," said he to his clerk.

"Monsieur," he went on, "though what you have told me is enough to enlighten me thoroughly, I should like to hear what you have to say to the other facts put forward in the petition. For instance, you are here carrying on a business such as is not habitually undertaken by a man of rank."

"We cannot discuss that matter here," said the Marquis, signing to the judge to quit the room. "Nouvion," said he to the old man, "I am going down to my rooms; the children will soon be in; dine with us."

"Then, Monsieur le Marquis," said Popinot on the stairs, "that is not your apartment?"

"No, Monsieur; I took those rooms for the office of this undertaking. You see," and he pointed to an advertisement sheet, "the 'History' is being brought out by one of the most respectable firms in Paris, and not by me."

The Marquis showed the lawyer into the ground-floor rooms, saying, "This is my apartment."

Popinot was quite touched by the poetry, not aimed at but pervading this dwelling. The weather was lovely, the windows were open, the air from the garden brought in a wholesome earthy smell, the sunshine brightened and gilded the woodwork, of a rather gloomy brown. At the sight Popinot made up his mind that a madman would hardly be capable of inventing the tender harmony of which he was at that moment conscious.

"I should like just such an apartment," thought he. "You think of leaving this part of the town?" he inquired.

"I hope so," replied the Marquis. "But I shall remain till my younger son has finished his studies, and till the children's character is thoroughly formed, before introduc-

ing them to the world and to their mother's circle. Indeed, after giving them the solid information they possess, I intend to complete it by taking them to travel to the capitals of Europe, that they may see men and things, and become accustomed to speak the languages they have learned. And, Monsieur," he went on, giving the judge a chair in the drawing-room, "I could not discuss the book on China with you in the presence of an old friend of my family, the Comte de Nouvion, who, having emigrated, has returned to France without any fortune whatever, and who is my partner in this concern, less for my profit than his. Without telling him what my motives were, I explained to him that I was as poor as he, but that I had enough money to start a speculation in which he might be usefully employed. My tutor was the Abbé Grozier, whom Charles X. on my recommendation appointed Keeper of the Books at the Arsenal, which were returned to that Prince when he was still Monsieur. The Abbé Grozier was deeply learned with regard to China, its manners and customs; he made me heir to this knowledge at an age when it is difficult not to become a fanatic for the things we learn. At five-and-twenty I knew Chinese, and I confess I have never been able to check myself in an exclusive admiration for that nation, who conquered their conquerors, whose annals extend back indisputably to a period more remote than mythological or Biblical times, who by their immutable institutions have preserved the integrity of their empire, whose monuments are gigantic, whose administration is perfect, among whom revolutions are impossible, who have regarded ideal beauty as a barren element in art, who have carried luxury and industry to such a pitch that we cannot outdo them in anything, while they are our equals in things where we believe ourselves superior.

"Still, Monsieur, though I often make a jest of comparing China with the present condition of European States, I am not a Chinaman, I am a French gentleman. If you entertain any doubts as to the financial side of this undertaking, I can prove to you that at this moment we have two

thousand five hundred subscribers to this work, which is literary, iconographical, statistical, and religious; its importance has been generally appreciated; our subscribers belong to every nation in Europe, we have but twelve hundred in France. Our book will cost about three hundred thousand francs, and the Comte de Nouvion will derive from it from six to seven thousand francs a year, for his comfort was the real motive of the undertaking. For my part, I aimed only at the possibility of affording my children some pleasures. The hundred thousand francs I have made, quite in spite of myself, will pay for their fencing lessons, horses, dress, and theatres, pay the masters who teach them accomplishments, procure them canvases to spoil, the books they may wish to buy, in short, all the little fancies which a father finds so much pleasure in gratifying. If I had been compelled to refuse these indulgences to my poor boys, who are so good and work so hard, the sacrifice I made to the honor of my name would have been doubly painful.

"In point of fact, the twelve years I have spent in retirement from the world to educate my children have led to my being completely forgotten at Court. I have given up the career of politics; I have lost my historical fortune, and all the distinctions which I might have acquired and bequeathed to my children; but our house will have lost nothing; my boys will be men of mark. Though I have missed the senatorship, they will win it nobly by devoting themselves to the affairs of the country, and doing such service as is not soon forgotten. While purifying the past record of my family, I have insured it a glorious future; and is not that to have achieved a noble task, though in secret and without glory? —And now, Monsieur, have you any other explanations to ask of me?"

At this instant the tramp of horses was heard in the courtyard.

"Here they are!" said the Marquis. In a moment the two lads, fashionably but plainly dressed, came into the room, booted, spurred, and gloved, and flourishing their

riding-whips. Their beaming faces brought in the freshness of the outer air; they were brilliant with health. They both grasped their father's hand, giving him a look, as friends do, a glance of unspoken affection, and then they bowed coldly to the lawyer. Popinot felt that it was quite unnecessary to question the Marquis as to his relations toward his sons.

"Have you enjoyed yourselves?" asked the Marquis.

"Yes, father; I knocked down six dolls in twelve shots at the first trial!" cried Camille.

"And where did you ride?"

"In the Bois; we saw my mother."

"Did she stop?"

"We were riding so fast just then that I daresay she did not see us," replied the young Count.

"But, then, why did you not go to speak to her?"

"I fancy I have noticed, father, that she does not care that we should speak to her in public," said Clément, in an undertone. "We are a little too big."

The judge's hearing was keen enough to catch these words, which brought a cloud to the Marquis's brow. Popinot took pleasure in contemplating the picture of the father and his boys. His eyes went back with a sense of pathos to M. d'Espard's face; his features, his expression, and his manner all expressed honesty in its noblest aspect, intellectual and chivalrous honesty, nobility in all its beauty.

"You—you see, Monsieur," said the Marquis, and his hesitation had returned, "you see that Justice may look in—in here at any time—yes, at any time—here. If there is anybody crazy, it can only be the children—the children—who are a little crazy about their father, and the father who is very crazy about his children—but that sort of madness rings true."

At this juncture Madame Jeanrenaud's voice was heard in the anteroom, and the good woman came bustling in, in spite of the manservant's remonstrances.

"I take no roundabout ways, I can tell you!" she ex-

claimed. "Yes, Monsieur le Marquis, I want to speak to you, this very minute," she went on, with a comprehensive bow to the company. "By George, and I am too late as it is, since Monsieur the criminal Judge is before me."

"Criminal!" cried the two boys.

"Good reason why I did not find you at your own house, since you are here. Well, well! the Law is always to the fore when there is mischief brewing.—I came, Monsieur le Marquis, to tell you that my son and I are of one mind to give you everything back, since our honor is threatened. My son and I, we had rather give you back everything than cause you the smallest trouble. My word, they must be as stupid as pans without handles to call you a lunatic—"

"A lunatic! My father?" exclaimed the boys, clinging to the Marquis. "What is this?"

"Silence, Madame," said Popinot.

"Children, leave us," said the Marquis.

The two boys went into the garden without a word, but very much alarmed.

"Madame," said the judge, "the moneys paid to you by Monsieur le Marquis were legally due, though given to you in virtue of a very far-reaching theory of honesty. If all the people possessed of confiscated goods, by whatever cause, even if acquired by treachery, were compelled to make restitution every hundred and fifty years, there would be few legitimate owners in France. The possessions of Jacques Cœur enriched twenty noble families; the confiscations pronounced by the English to the advantage of their adherents at the time when they held a part of France made the fortune of several princely houses.

"Our law allows M. d'Espard to dispose of his income without accounting for it, or suffering him to be accused of its misapplication. A Commission in Lunacy can only be granted when a man's actions are devoid of reason; but in this case, the remittances made to you have a reason based on the most sacred and most honorable motives. Hence you may keep it all without remorse, and leave the world to mis-

interpret a noble action. In Paris, the highest virtue is the object of the foulest calumny. It is, unfortunately, the present condition of society that makes the Marquis's actions sublime. For the honor of my country, I would that such deeds were regarded as a matter of course; but, as things are, I am forced by comparison to look upon M. d'Espard as a man to whom a crown should be awarded, rather than that he should be threatened with a Commission in Lunacy.

"In the course of a long professional career, I have seen and heard nothing which has touched me more deeply than that I have just seen and heard. But it is not extraordinary that virtue should wear its noblest aspect when it is practiced by men of the highest class.

"Having heard me express myself in this way, I hope, Monsieur le Marquis, that you feel certain of my silence, and that you will not for a moment be uneasy as to the decision pronounced in the case—if it comes before the Court."

"There, now! Well said," cried Madame Jeanrenaud. "That is something like a judge! Look here, my dear sir, I would hug you if I were not so ugly; you speak like a book."

The Marquis held out his hand to Popinot, who gently pressed it with a look full of sympathetic comprehension at this great man in private life, and the Marquis responded with a pleasant smile. These two natures, both so large and full—one commonplace but divinely kind, the other lofty and sublime—had fallen into unison gently, without a jar, without a flash of passion, as though two pure lights had been merged into one. The father of a whole district felt himself worthy to grasp the hand of this man who was doubly noble, and the Marquis felt in the depths of his soul an instinct that told him that the judge's hand was one of those from which the treasures of inexhaustible beneficence perennially flow.

"Monsieur le Marquis," added Popinot, with a bow, "I am happy to be able to tell you that, from the first words of this inquiry, I regarded my clerk as quite unnecessary."

He went close to M. d'Espard, led him into the window-bay, and said: "It is time that you should return home, Monsieur. I believe that Madame la Marquise has acted in this matter under an influence which you ought at once to counteract."

Popinot withdrew; he looked back several times as he crossed the courtyard, touched by the recollection of the scene. It was one of those which take root in the memory to blossom again in certain hours when the soul seeks consolation.

"Those rooms would just suit me," said he to himself as he reached home. "If M. d'Espard leaves them, I will take up his lease."

The next day, at about ten in the morning, Popinot, who had written out his report the previous evening, made his way to the Palais de Justice, intending to have prompt and righteous justice done. As he went into the robing-room to put on his gown and bands, the usher told him that the President of his Court begged him to attend in his private room, where he was waiting for him. Popinot forthwith obeyed.

"Good-morning, my dear Popinot," said the President, "I have been waiting for you."

"Why, Monsieur le President, is anything wrong?"

"A mere silly trifle," said the President. "The Keeper of the Seals, with whom I had the honor of dining yesterday, led me apart into a corner. He had heard that you had been to tea with Madame d'Espard, in whose case you were employed to make inquiries. He gave me to understand that it would be as well that you should not sit on this case—"

"But, Monsieur le Président, I can prove that I left Madame d'Espard's house at the moment when tea was brought in. And my conscience—"

"Yes, yes; the whole Bench, the two Courts, all the profession know you. I need not repeat what I said about you to his Eminence; but, you know, 'Cæsar's wife must

not be suspected.' So we shall not make this foolish trifle a matter of discipline, but only of the proprieties. Between ourselves, it is not on your account, but on that of the Bench."

"But, Monsieur, if you only knew the kind of woman—" said the judge, trying to pull his report out of his pocket.

"I am perfectly certain that you have proceeded in this matter with the strictest independence of judgment. I myself, in the provinces, have often taken more than a cup of tea with the people I had to try; but the fact that the Keeper of the Seals should have mentioned it, and that you might be talked about, is enough to make the Court avoid any discussion of the matter. Any conflict with public opinion must always be dangerous for a constitutional body, even when the right is on its side against the public, because their weapons are not equal. Journalism may say or suppose anything, and our dignity forbids us even to reply. In fact, I have spoken of the matter to your President, and M. Camusot has been appointed in your place on your retirement, which you will signify. It is a family matter, so to speak. And I now beg you to signify your retirement from the case as a personal favor. To make up, you will get the Cross of the Legion of Honor, which has so long been due to you. I make that my business."

When he saw M. Camusot, a judge recently called to Paris from a provincial Court of the same class, as he went forward bowing to the Judge and the President, Popinot could not suppress an ironical smile. This pale, fair young man, full of covert ambition, looked ready to hang and unhang, at the pleasure of any earthly king, the innocent and the guilty alike, and to follow the example of a Laubardemont rather than that of a Molé.

Popinot withdrew with a bow; he scorned to deny the lying accusation that had been brought against him.

PARIS, *February, 1836.*

# PIERRE GRASSOU

*To Lieutenant-Colonel Périollas (of the Artillery) as a proof of the author's affection and esteem.*

*De Balzac*

*ON EVERY* occasion when you have gone seriously to study the Exhibition of works in sculpture and painting, such as it has been since the Revolution of 1830, have you not been seized by a feeling of discomfort, boredom, and melancholy at the sight of the long, overfilled galleries? Since 1830 the Salon has ceased to exist. Once more the Louvre has been taken by storm by the mob of artists, and they have kept possession. Formerly, when the Salon gave us a choice collection of works of art, it secured the greatest honors for the examples exhibited there. Among the two hundred selected pictures the public chose again; a crown was awarded to the masterpieces by unknown hands. Impassioned discussions arose as to the merits of a painting. The abuse heaped on Delacroix and on Ingres were not of less service to them than the praises and fanaticism of their adherents.

In our day neither the crowd nor the critic can be vehement over the objects in this bazaar. Being compelled to make the selection which was formerly undertaken by the examining jury, their attention is exhausted by the effort; and by the time it is finished the Exhibition closes.

Until 1817 the pictures accepted never extended beyond the first two columns of the long gallery containing the works of the old masters, and this year they filled the whole of this space, to the great surprise of the public. Historical painting, *genre*, easel pictures, landscape, flowers, animals, and water-

color painting—each of these eight classes could never yield more than twenty pictures worthy of the eye of the public, who cannot give attention to a larger collection of pictures.

The more the number of artists increases, the more exacting should the jury of selection become. All was lost as soon as the Salon encroached further on the gallery. The Salon should have been kept within fixed and restricted limits, inflexibly defined, where each class might exhibit its best works. The experience of ten years has proved the excellence of the old rules. Instead of a tourney, you now have a riot; instead of a glorious exhibition, you have a medley bazaar; instead of a selection, you have everything at once. What is the result? A great artist is swamped. The "Turkish Café," the "Children at the Well," the "Torture by Hooks," and the "Joseph" by Decamps would have done more for his glory if exhibited, all four, in the great room with the hundred other good pictures of the year, than his twenty canvases buried among three thousand paintings, and dispersed among six galleries.

With strange perversity, since the doors have been thrown open to all, there has been much talk of unappreciated genius. When, twelve years before, the "Courtesan," by Ingres, and Sigalon's pictures, Géricault's "Raft of the Medusa," Delacroix's "Massacre of Scio," and Eugène Deveria's "Baptism of Henri IV."—accepted, as they were, by yet more famous men, who were taxed with jealousy—revealed to the world, notwithstanding the carping of critics, the existence of youthful and ardent painters, not a complaint was ever heard. But now, when the veriest dauber of canvas can display his works, we hear of nothing but misunderstood talent. Where there is no longer any judgment, nothing is judged. Our artists, do what they may, will come back to the ordeal of selection which recommends their work to the admiration of the public for whom they toil. Without the choice exercised by the Academy, there will be no Salon; and without the Salon, art may perish.

Since the catalogue has grown to be a fat volume, many

names are found there which remain obscure, notwithstanding the list of ten or twelve pictures that follows them. Among these names, the least known of all perhaps is that of an artist named Pierre Grassou, a native of Fougères, and called, for shortness, Fougères in the artist world—a name which nowadays fills so much space on the page, and which has suggested the bitter reflections introducing this sketch of his life, and applicable to some other members of the artist tribe.

In 1832 Fougères was living in the Rue de Navarin, on the fourth floor of one of those tall, narrow houses that are like the obelisk of Luxor, which have a passage and a dark, narrow staircase with dangerous turnings, which are not wide enough for more than three windows on each floor, and have a courtyard, or, to be exact, a square well at the back. Above the three or four rooms inhabited by Fougères was his studio, looking out over Montmartre. The studio, painted brick red; the floor, carefully stained brown and polished; each chair provided with a square, bordered mat; the sofa, plain enough, but as clean as that in a tradeswoman's bedroom; everything betrayed the petty existence of a narrow mind and the carefulness of a poor man. There was a closet for keeping the studio properties in, a breakfast table, a sideboard, a desk, and the various objects necessary for painting, all clean and in order. The stove, too, had the benefit of this Dutch neatness, which was all the more conspicuous because the pure and steady northern sky flooded the back room with clear, cold light. Fougères, a mere painter of *genre*, had no need for the huge machinery which ruins historical painters; he had never discerned in himself faculties competent to venture on the higher walks of art, and was still content with small easels.

In the beginning of the month of December of that year, the season when Paris Philistines are periodically attacked by the burlesque idea of perpetuating their faces—in themselves a sufficient burden—Pierre Grassou, having risen early, was setting his palette, lighting his stove, eating a roll soaked

in milk, and waiting to work till his window panes should have thawed enough to let daylight in. The weather was dry and fine. At this instant, the painter, eating with the patient, resigned look that tells so much, recognized the footfall of a man who had had the influence over his life which people of his class have in the career of most artists—Elias Magus, a picture dealer, a usurer in canvas. And, in fact, Elias Magus came in, at the moment when the painter was about to begin work in his elaborately clean studio.

"How is yourself, old rascal?" said the painter.

Fougères had won the Cross; Elias bought his pictures for two or three hundred francs, and gave himself the most artistic airs.

"Business is bad," replied Elias. "You all are such lords; you talk of two hundred francs as soon as you have six sous worth of paint on the canvas.—But you are a very good fellow, you are. You are a man of method, and I have come to bring you a good job."

"*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*," said Fougères. "Do you know Latin?"

"No."

"Well, that means that the Greeks did not offer a bit of good business to the Trojans without making something out of it. In those days they used to say, 'Take my horse.' Nowadays we say, 'Take my trash!'—Well, what do you want, Ulysses-Lagingeole-Elias-Magus?"

This speech shows the degree of sweetness and wit which Fougères could put into what painters call studio-chaff.

"I don't say that you will not have to paint me two pictures for nothing."

"Oh! oh!"

"I leave it to you; I do not ask for them. You are an honest artist."

"Indeed?"

"Well. I am bringing you a father, a mother, and an only daughter."

"All unique specimens?"

"My word, yes, indeed!—to have their portraits painted. The worthy folk, crazy about art, have never dared venture into a studio. The daughter will have a hundred thousand francs on her marriage. You may do well to paint such people. Family portraits for yourself, who knows?"

The old German image, who passes muster as a man, and is called Elias Magus, broke off to laugh a dry cackle that horrified the painter. He felt as if he had heard Mephistopheles talking of marriage.

"The portraits are to be five hundred francs apiece; you may give me three pictures."

"Right you are!" said Fougères cheerfully.

"And if you marry the daughter, you will not forget me—"

"Marry? I!" cried Pierre Grassou; "I, who am used to have a bed to myself, to get up early, whose life is all laid out—"

"A hundred thousand francs," said Magus, "and a sweet girl, full of golden lights like a Titian!"

"And what position do these people hold?"

"Retired merchants: in love with the arts at the present moment; they have a country house at Ville d'Avray, and ten or twelve thousand francs a year."

"What was their business?"

"Bottles."

"Don't speak that word; I fancy I hear corks being cut, and it sets my teeth on edge."

"Well; am I to bring them?"

"Three portraits; I will send them to the Salon; I might go in for portrait-painting.—All right, yes."

And old Elias went downstairs to fetch the Vervelle family.

To understand exactly what the outcome of such a proposal would be on the painter, and the effect produced on him by Monsieur and Madame Vervelle, graced by the addition of their only daughter, it is necessary to glance for a moment at the past life of Pierre Grassou of Fougères. As

a pupil, he had learned to draw of Servin, who was regarded in the academical world as a great draughtsman. He afterward worked under Schinner, to discover the secrets of the powerful and splendid coloring that characterizes that master. The master and his disciples had kept the secrets; Pierre had discovered nothing. From thence Fougères had gone to Sommervieux's studio to familiarize himself with that part of art which is called composition; but composition was shy, and held aloof from him. Then he had tried to steal from Granet and Drolling the mystery of their luminous interiors; the two masters had not allowed him to rob them. Finally, Fougères had finished his training under Duval-Lecamus.

Through all these studies and various transformations, Fougères' quiet, steady habits had furnished materials for mockery in every studio where he had worked; but he everywhere disarmed his comrades by his diffidence and his lamb-like patience and meekness. The masters had no sympathy with this worthy lad; masters like brilliant fellows, eccentric spirits, farcical and fiery, or gloomy and deeply meditative, promising future talent. Everything in Fougères proclaimed his mediocrity. His nickname of Fougères—the name of the painter in the play by "Fabre d'Eglantine"—was the pretext for endless affronts, but by force of circumstances he was saddled with the name of the town "where he first saw the light."

Grassou de Fougères matched his name. Plump and rather short, he had a dull complexion, brown eyes, black hair, a thick prominent nose, a rather wide mouth, and long ears. His placid, gentle, resigned expression did little to improve these features of a face that was full of health but not of movement. He could never suffer from the flow of blood, the vehemence of thought, or the spirit of comedy by which a great artist is to be known. This youth, born to be a virtuous citizen, had come from his provincial home to serve as shop-clerk to a color-man, a native of Mayenne, distantly related to the d'Orgemonts, and he had made him-

self a painter by the sheer obstinacy which is the backbone of the Breton character. What he had endured, and the way in which he lived during his period of study, God alone knows. He suffered as much as great men suffer when they are haunted by want, and hunted down like wild beasts by the pack of inferior souls, and the whole army of vanity thirsting for revenge.

As soon as he thought himself strong enough for flight on his own wings, he took a studio at the top of the Rue des Martyrs, and there he began to work. He first sent in a picture in 1819. The picture he offered the jury for their exhibition at the Louvre represented a Village Wedding, a laborious imitation of Greuze's picture. It was refused. When Fougères heard the fatal sentence, he did not fly into those furies or fits of epileptic vanity to which proud spirits are liable, and which sometimes end in a challenge sent to the President or the Secretary, or in threats of assassination. Fougères calmly received his picture back, wrapped it in a handkerchief, and brought it home to his studio, swearing that he would yet become a great painter.

He placed the canvas on the easel and went to call on his old master, a man of immense talent—Schinner—a gentle and patient artist, whose success had been brilliant at the last Salon. He begged him to come and criticise the rejected work. The great painter left everything and went. When poor Fougères had placed him in front of the painting, Schinner at the first glance took Fougères by the hand:

"You are a capital good fellow; you have a heart of gold, it will not be fair to deceive you. Listen; you have kept all the promise you showed at the studio. When a man has such stuff as that at the end of his brush, my good fellow, he had better leave his paints in Brullon's shop, and not deprive others of the canvas. Get home early, pull on your cotton nightcap, be in bed by nine; and to-morrow morning at ten o'clock go to some office and ask for work, and have done with art."

"My good friend," said Fougères, "my picture is con-

demned already. It is not a verdict that I want, but the reasons for it."

"Well, then, your tone is gray and cold; you see nature through a crape veil; your drawing is heavy and clumsy; your composition is borrowed from Greuze, who only redeemed his faults by qualities which you have not."

As he pointed out the faults of the picture, Schinner saw in Fougères' face so deep an expression of grief that he took him away to dine, and tried to comfort him.

Next day, by seven in the morning, Fougères, before his easel, was working over the condemned canvas; he warmed up the color, made the corrections suggested by Schinner, and touched up the figures. Then, sick of such patching, he took it to Elias Magus. Elias Magus, being a sort of Dutch-Belgian-Fleming, had three reasons for being what he was—miserly and rich. He had lately come from Bordeaux, and was starting in business in Paris as a picture-dealer; he lived on the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle. Fougères, who trusted to his palette to take him to the baker's, bravely ate bread and walnuts, or bread and milk, or bread and cherries, or bread and cheese, according to the season. Elias Magus, to whom Pierre offered his first picture, eyed it for a long time, and then gave him fifteen francs.

"Taking fifteen francs a year and spending a thousand, I shall go fast and far," said Fougères, smiling.

Elias Magus gave a shrug and bit his thumb at the thought that he might have had the picture for five francs. Every morning, for some days, Fougères went down the Rue des Martyrs, lost himself in the crowd on the boulevard opposite Magus' shop, and fixed his eyes on his picture—which did not attract the gaze of the passers-by. Toward the end of the week the picture disappeared. Fougères wandered up the boulevard toward the picture-dealer's shop with an affectation of amusing himself. The Jew was standing in the doorway.

"Well, you have sold my picture?"

"There it is," said Magus. "I am having it framed

to show to some man who fancies himself knowing in paintings."

Fougères did not dare come along the boulevard any more. He began a new picture; for two months he labored at it, feeding like a mouse and working like a galley-slave. One evening he walked out on the boulevard; his feet carried him involuntarily to Magus' shop; he could nowhere see his picture.

"I have sold your picture," said the dealer to the artist.

"For how much?"

"I got my money back with a little interest. Paint me some Flemish interiors, an Anatomy Lecture, a landscape; I will take them of you," said Elias.

Fougères could have hugged Magus in his arms; he looked upon him as a father. He went home with joy in his heart. Then Schinner, the great Schinner, was mistaken! In that vast city of Paris there were some hearts that beat in unison with that of Grassou; his talent was discerned and appreciated!

The poor fellow, at seven-and-twenty, had the artlessness of a boy of sixteen. Any one else, one of your distrustful, suspicious artists, would have noticed Elias' diabolical expression, have seen the quiver of his beard, the ironical curl of his mustache, the action of his shoulders, all betraying the satisfaction of Walter Scott's Jew cheating a Christian. Fougères paraded the boulevards with a joy that gave his face an expression of pride. He looked like a schoolboy protecting a woman. He met Joseph Bridau, one of his fellow-students, one of those eccentric men of genius who are predestined to glory and disaster. Joseph Bridau, having a few sous in his pocket, as he expressed it, took Fougères to the opera. Fougères did not see the ballet, did not hear the music; he was imagining pictures, he was painting.

He left Joseph half-way through the evening, and ran home to make sketches by lamplight; he invented thirty pictures, full of reminiscences, and believed himself a genius. Next day he bought some colors and canvases

of various sizes; he spread out some bread and some cheese on his table; he got some water in a jug, and a store of wood for his stove; then, to use the studio phrase, he pegged away at his painting; he employed a few models, and Magus lent him draperies. After two months of seclusion, the Breton had finished four pictures. He again asked Schinner's advice, with the addition of Joseph Bridau's. The two painters found these works to be a servile imitation of Dutch landscapes, of Metzu's interiors, and the fourth was a version of Rembrandt's "Anatomy Lecture."

"Always imitations!" said Schinner. "Ah, Fougères would find it hard to be original."

"You ought to turn your attention to something else than painting," said Bridau.

"To what?" said Fougères.

"Go in for literature."

Fougères bent his head as sheep do before rain. Then he asked and got some practical advice, touched up his paintings, and carried them to Elias. Elias gave him twenty-five francs for each. At this price Fougères made nothing, but, thanks to his abstemiousness, he lost nothing. He took some walks to see what became of his pictures, and had a singular hallucination. His works, so firmly painted, so neat, as hard as tin-plate iron, and as shining as painting on porcelain, seemed to be covered with a fog; they looked quite like old masters.

Elias had just gone out; Fougères could obtain no information as to this phenomenon. He thought his eyes deceived him.

The painter went home to his studio to make new old masters. After seven years of constant work, Fougères was able to compose and paint fairly good pictures. He did as well as all the other artists of the second class. Elias bought and sold all the poor Breton's pictures, while he laboriously earned a hundred louis a year, and did not spend more than twelve hundred francs.

At the Exhibition of 1829, Léon de Lora, Schinner and

Bridau, who all three filled a large space, and were at the head of the new movement in art, took pity on their old comrade's perseverance and poverty; they managed to get a picture by Fougères accepted and hung in the great room. This work, of thrilling interest, recalling Vigneron in its sentiment, and Dubufe's early manner in its execution, represented a young man in prison having the back of his head shaved. On one side stood a priest, on the other a young woman in tears. A lawyer's clerk was reading an official document. On a wretched table stood a meal which no one had eaten. The light came in through the bars of a high window. It was enough to make the good folk shudder, and they shuddered.

Fougères had borrowed directly from Gerard Dow's masterpiece: he had turned the group of the "Dropsical Woman" toward the window instead of facing the spectator. He had put the condemned prisoner in the place of the dying woman—the same pallor, the same look, the same appeal to heaven. Instead of the Dutch physician, there was the rigid official figure of the clerk dressed in black; but he had added an old woman by the side of Gerard Dow's young girl. The cruelly good-humored face of the executioner crowned the group. This plagiarism, skilfully concealed, was not recognized.

The catalogue contained these words:

510, GRASSOU DE FOUGÈRES (PIERRE), Rue de Navarin, 2.
The Chouan's Toilet; condemned to Death, 1809.

Though quite mediocre, the picture had a prodigious success, for it reminded the spectators of the affair of the robbers—known as the *Chauffeurs*—of Mortagne. A crowd collected every day in front of the picture, which became the fashion, and Charles X. stopped to look at it. Madame, having heard of the poor Breton's patient life, grew enthusiastic about him. The Duc d'Orléans asked the price of the painting. The priests told Madame the Dauphiness that the work was full of pious feeling; it had no doubt a very

satisfactory suggestion of religion. Monseigneur the Dauphin admired the dust on the window panes, a stupid, dull mistake, for what Fougères had intended was a greenish tone, which spoke of damp at the bottom of the walls. Madame bought the picture for a thousand francs, and the Dauphin gave a commission for another. Charles X. bestowed the Cross on this son of a peasant who had fought for the Royal Cause in 1799; Joseph Bridau, a great painter, was not decorated. The Minister of the Interior ordered two sacred pictures for the church at Fougères. This Salon was to Pierre Grassou fortune, glory, a future, and life.

To invent in any kind is to die by inches; to copy is to live. Having at last discovered a vein full of gold, Grassou of Fougères practiced that part of this barbarous maxim to which the world owes the atrocious mediocrity whose duty it is to elect its superiors in every class of society, but which naturally elects itself, and wages pitiless war against all real talent. The principle of election universally applied is a bad one; France will get over it. At the same time, Fougères was so gentle and kind that his modesty, his simplicity, and his astonishment silenced recriminations and envy. Then, again, he had on his side all the successful Grassous, representing all the Grassous to come. Some people, touched by the energy of a man whom nothing had discouraged, spoke of Domenichino, and said, "Hard work in the arts must be rewarded. Grassou has earned his success. He has been pegging at it for ten years, poor old fellow!"

This exclamation, "Poor old fellow!" counted for a great deal in the support and congratulations the painter received. Pity elevates as many second-rate talents as envy runs down great artists. The newspapers had not been sparing of criticism, but the Chevalier Fougères took it all as he took his friends' advice, with angelic patience. Rich now, with fifteen thousand francs very hardly earned, he furnished his rooms and his studio in the Rue de Navarin, he painted the picture ordered by Monseigneur the Dauphin, and the two sacred works commanded by the Minister, finishing

them to the day, with a punctuality perfectly distracting to the cashier of the Ministry, accustomed to quite other ways. But note the good luck of methodical people! If he had delayed, Grassou, overtaken by the revolution of July, would never have been paid.

By the time he was seven-and-thirty Fougères had manufactured for Elias Magus about two hundred pictures, all perfectly unknown, but by which he had gained with practice that satisfactory handling, that pitch of dexterity at which an artist shrugs his shoulders, and which is dear to the Philistine. Fougères was loved by his friends for his rectitude of mind and steadfastness of feeling, for his perfectly obliging temper and loyal spirit; though they had no respect for his palette, they were attached to the man who held it.

"What a pity that Fougères should indulge in the vice of painting!" his friends would say.

Grassou, however, could give sound advice, like the newspaper writers, who are incapable of producing a book, but who know full well where a book is faulty. But there was a difference between Fougères and these literary critics; he was keenly alive to every beauty, he acknowledged it, and his advice was stamped with a sense of justice which made his strictures acceptable.

After the revolution of July Fougères sent in ten or more paintings to every exhibition, of which the jury would accept four or five. He lived with the strictest economy, and his whole household consisted of a woman to manage the housework. His amusements lay solely in visits to his friends, and in going to see works of art; he treated himself to some little tours in France, and dreamed of seeking inspiration in Switzerland. This wretched artist was a good citizen; he served in the Guard, turned out for inspection, and paid his rent and bills with the vulgarest punctuality. Having lived in hard work and penury, he had never had time to be in love. A bachelor and poor, up to the present day he had had no wish to complicate his simple existence.

Having no idea of any way of increasing his wealth, he took his savings and his earnings every quarter to his notary, Cardot. When the notary had a thousand crowns in hand, he invested them in a first mortgage, with substitution in favor of the wife's rights if the borrower should marry, or in favor of the seller if the borrower should wish to pay it off. The notary drew the interest and added it to the sums deposited by Grassou de Fougères. The painter looked forward to the happy day when his investments should reach the imposing figure of two thousand francs a year, when he would indulge in the *otium cum dignitate* of an artist and paint pictures—oh! but such pictures! Real pictures, finished pictures—something like, clipping, stunning! His fondest hope, his dream of joy, the climax of all his hopes—would you like to know it? It was to be elected to the Institute and wear the rosette of the officers of the Legion of Honor! To sit by Schinner and Léon de Lora! To get into the Academy before Bridau! To have a rosette in his buttonhole.—What a vision! Only your commonplace mind can think of everything.

On hearing several footsteps on the stairs, Fougères pushed his fingers through his top-knot of hair, buttoned his bottle-green waistcoat, and was not a little surprised at the entrance of a face of the kind known in the studio as a *melon*. This fruit was perched on a pumpkin dressed in blue cloth, and graced with a dangling bunch of jingling seals. The melon snorted like a porpoise, the pumpkin walked on turnips incorrectly called legs. A real artist would at once have sketched such a caricature of the bottle merchant and then have shown him out, saying that he did not paint vegetables. Fougères looked at his customer without laughing, for M. Vervelle wore in his shirt-front a diamond worth a thousand crowns. Fougères glanced at Magus, and said in the studio slang of the day, "A fat job!" meaning that the worthy was rich.

M. Vervelle heard it and frowned. He brought in his

train some other vegetable combinations in the persons of his wife and daughter. The wife had in her face a fine mahogany tone; she looked like a cocoanut surmounted by a head and tightened in with a belt; she twirled round on her feet; her dress was yellow, with black stripes. She proudly displayed absurd mittens on a pair of hands as swollen as a glover's sign. The feathers of a first-class funeral waved over a coal-scuttle bonnet; lace frills covered a figure as round behind as before, thus the spherical form of the cocoanut was perfect. Her feet, which a painter would have termed hoofs, had a garnish of half-an-inch of fat projecting beyond her patent-leather shoes. How had her feet been got into the shoes? Who can tell?

Behind her came a young asparagus shoot, green and yellow as to her dress, with a small head covered with hair in flat braids of a carroty yellow which a Roman would have adored, thread-paper arms, a fairly white but freckled skin, large innocent eyes, with colorless lashes and faintly marked eyebrows, a Leghorn straw hat, trimmed with a couple of honest white satin bows, and bound with white satin, virtuously red hands, and feet like her mother's.

These three persons, as they looked round the studio, had a look of beatitude which showed a highly respectable enthusiasm for art.

"And it is you, sir, who are going to take our likenesses?" said the father, assuming a little dashing air.

"Yes, sir," replied Grassou.

"Vervelle, he has the Cross," said the wife to her husband in a whisper while the painter's back was turned.

"Should I have our portraits painted by an artist who was not 'decorated'?" retorted the bottle-merchant.

Elias Magus bowed to the Vervelle family and went away. Grassou followed him on to the landing.

"Who but you would have discovered such a set of phizzes?"

"A hundred thousand francs in settlement!"

"Yes, but what a family!"

"And three hundred thousand francs in expectations, a house in the Rue Boucherat, and a country place at Ville d'Avray."

"Boucherat, bottles, bumpkins, and bounce!" said the painter.

"You will be out of want for the rest of your days," said Elias.

This idea flashed into Pierre Grassou's brain as the morning light had broken on his attic. As he placed the young lady's father in position, he thought him really good-looking, and admired his face with its strong purple tones. The mother and daughter hovered round the painter, wondering at all his preparations; to them he seemed a god. This visible adoration was pleasing to Fougères. The golden calf cast its fantastic reflection on this family.

"You must earn enormous sums; but you spend it as fast as you get it?" said the mother.

"No, Madame," replied the painter, "I do not spend. I have not means to amuse myself. My notary invests my money; he knows what I have, and when once the money is in his hands I think no more about it."

"And I have always been told that painters were a thriftless set!" said father Vervelle.

"Who is your notary, if it is not too great a liberty?" said Madame Vervelle.

"A capital fellow all round—Cardot."

"Lord! Lord! Isn't that funny, now!" said Vervelle. "Why, Cardot is ours too."

"Do not move," said the painter.

"Sit still, do, Anténor," said his wife; "you will put the gentleman out; if you could see him working you would understand."

"Gracious me, why did you never have me taught art?" said Mademoiselle Vervelle to her parents.

"Virginie!" exclaimed her mother, "there are certain things a young lady cannot learn. When you are married—well and good. Till then be content."

In the course of this first sitting the Vervelle family became almost intimate with the worthy artist. They were to come again two days after. As they left, the father and mother desired Virginie to go first; but in spite of the distance between them, she heard these words, of which the meaning must have roused her curiosity:

"*Décoré*—thirty-seven—an artist who gets commissions, and places his money in our notary's hands. We will consult Cardot. Madame de Fougères, heh! not a bad name! He does not look like a bad fellow! A man of business, you would say? But so long as a merchant has not retired from business, you can never tell what your daughter may come to; while an artist who saves.—And then we are fond of art. —Well, well!—"

While the Vervelles were discussing him, Pierre Grassou was thinking of the Vervelles. He found it impossible to remain quietly in his studio; he walked up and down the boulevard, looking at every red-haired woman who went by! He argued with himself in the strangest way: Gold was the most splendid of the metals, yellow stood for gold; the ancient Romans liked red-haired women, and he became a Roman, and so forth. After being married two years, what does a man care for his wife's complexion? Beauty fades—but ugliness remains! Money is half of happiness. That evening, when he went to bed, the painter had already persuaded himself that Virginie Vervelle was charming.

When the trio walked in on the day fixed for the second sitting, the artist received them with an amiable smile. The rogue had shaved, had put on a clean white shirt; he had chosen a becoming pair of trousers, and red slippers with Turkish toes. The family responded with a smile as flattering as the artist's; Virginie turned as red as her hair, dropped her eyes, and turned away her head, looking at the studies. Pierre Grassou thought these little affectations quite bewitching. Virginie was graceful; happily, she was like neither father nor mother. But whom was she like?

"Ah, I see," said he to himself; "the mother has had an eye to business."

During the sitting there was a war of wits between the family and the painter, who was so audacious as to say that father Vervelle was witty. After this piece of flattery the family took possession of the painter's heart in double-quick time; he gave one of his drawings to Virginie, and a sketch to her mother.

"For nothing?" they asked.

Pierre Grassou could not help smiling.

"You must not give your works away like this; they are money," said Vervelle.

At the third sitting old Vervelle spoke of a fine collection of pictures he had in his country house at Ville d'Avray—Rubens, Gerard Dow, Mieris, Terburg, Rembrandt, a Titian, Paul Potter, etc.

"M. Vervelle has been frightfully extravagant," said Madame Vervelle pompously. "He has a hundred thousand francs' worth of pictures."

"I am fond of the arts," said the bottle-merchant.

When Madame Vervelle's portrait was begun, that of her husband was nearly finished. The enthusiasm of the family now knew no bounds. The notary had praised the artist in the highest terms. Pierre Grassou was in his opinion the best fellow on earth, one of the steadiest of artists, who had indeed saved thirty-six thousand francs; his days of poverty were past, he was making ten thousand francs a year, he was reinvesting his interest, and he was incapable of making a woman unhappy. This last sentence was of great weight in the scale The friends of the family heard nothing talked of but the celebrated Fougères.

By the time Fougères began the portrait of Virginie he was already the son-in-law elect of the Vervelle couple. The trio expanded in this studio, which they had begun to regard as a home; there was an inexplicable attraction to them in this cleaned, cared-for, neat, artistic spot. *Abyssus abyssum*, like to like.

Toward the end of the sitting the stairs were shaken, the door was flung open, and in came Joseph Bridau; he rode the whirlwind, his hair was flying; in he came with his broad, deeply-seamed face, shot lightning glances all round the room, and came suddenly up to Grassou, pulling his coat across the gastric region, and trying to button it, but in vain, for the button mold had escaped from its cloth cover.

"Times are bad," he said to Grassou.

"Hah?"

"The duns are at my heels.—Hallo! are you painting that sort of thing?"

"Hold your tongue!"

"To be sure—"

The Vervelle family, excessively taken aback by this apparition, turned from the usual red to the cherry scarlet of a fierce fire.

"It pays," said Joseph. "Have you any shot in your locker?"

"Do you want much?"

"A five hundred franc note. . . . There is a party after me of the bloodhound kind, who, when once they have set their teeth, do not let go without having the piece out. What a set!"

"I will give you a line to my notary—"

"What! you have a notary?"

"Yes."

"Then that accounts for your still painting cheeks rose-pink, only fit for a hairdresser's doll!"

Grassou could not help reddening, for Virginie was sitting to him.

"Paint nature as it is," the great painter went on. "Mademoiselle is red-haired. Well, is that a deadly sin? Everything is fine in painting. Squeeze me out some cinnabar, warm up those cheeks, give me those little brown freckles, butter your canvas boldly! Do you want to do better than Nature?"

"Here," said Fougères, "take my place while I write."

Vervelle waddled to the writing-table and spoke in Grassou's ear.

"That interfering muddler will spoil it," said the bottle-merchant.

"If he would paint your Virginie's portrait, it would be worth a thousand of mine," replied Fougères indignantly.

On hearing this, the goodman quietly beat a retreat to join his wife, who sat bewildered at the invasion of this wild beast, and not at all happy at seeing him co-operating in her daughter's portrait.

"There, carry out those hints," said Bridau, returning the palette, and taking the note. "I will not thank you.—I can get back to D'Arthez's château; I am painting a dining-room for him, and Léon de Lora is doing panels over the doors—masterpieces. Come and see us!"

He went off without bowing even, so sick was he of looking at Virginie.

"Who is that man?" asked Madame Vervelle.

"A great artist," replied Grassou.

There was a moment's silence.

"Are you quite sure," said Virginie, "that he has brought no ill-luck to my portrait? . . . He frightened me."

"He has only improved it," said Grassou.

"If he is a great artist, I prefer a great artist like you," said Madame de Vervelle.

"Oh, mamma, Monsieur Fougères is a much greater artist. He will take me full length," remarked Virginie.

The eccentricities of genius had scared these steady-going Philistines.

The year had now reached that pleasant autumn season prettily called Saint-Martin's summer. It was with the shyness of a neophyte in the presence of a man of genius that Vervelle ventured to invite Grassou to spend the following Sunday at his country-house. He knew how little attraction a *bourgeois* family could offer to an artist.

"You artists," said he, "must have excitement, fine scenes, and clever company. But I can give you some good

wine, and I rely on my pictures to make up for the dulness an artist like you must feel among tradesfolk."

This worship, which greatly soothed his vanity, delighted poor Pierre Grassou, who was little used to such compliments. This worthy artist, this ignominious mediocrity, this heart of gold, this loyal soul, this blundering draughtsman, this best of good fellows, displaying the Cross of the Royal Order of the Legion of Honor, got himself up with care to go and enjoy the last fine days of the year at Ville d'Avray. The painter arrived unpretentiously by the public conveyance, and could not help admiring the bottle-merchant's handsome residence placed in the midst of a park of about five acres, at the top of the hill, and the best point of view. To marry Virginie meant owning this fine house some day!

He was received by the Vervelles with an enthusiasm, a delight, a genuine heartiness, a simple, commonplace stupidity that overpowered him. It was a day of triumph. The future son-in-law was taken to walk along the nankeen-colored paths, which had been raked, as was due, for a great man. The very trees looked as if they had been brushed and combed, the lawns were mown. The pure country air diluted kitchen odors of the most comforting character. Everything in the house proclaimed, "We have a great artist here!" Little father Vervelle rolled about his paddock like an apple, the daughter wriggled after him like an eel, and the mother followed with great dignity. For seven hours these three beings never released Grassou.

After a dinner, of which the length matched the splendor, Monsieur and Madame Vervelle came to their grand surprise—the opening of the picture gallery, lighted up by lamps carefully arranged for effect. Three neighbors, all retired business men, an uncle from whom they had expectations, invited in honor of the great artist, an old Aunt Vervelle, and the other guests followed Grassou into the gallery, all curious to hear his opinion of little Daddy Vervelle's famous collection, for he overpowered them by the fabu-

lous value of his pictures. The bottle-merchant seemed to wish to vie with King Louis-Philippe and the galleries of Versailles.

The pictures, splendidly framed, bore tickets, on which might be read in black letters on a gold label :

RUBENS
*A Dance of Fauns and Nymphs*

REMBRANDT
*Interior of a Dissecting-room*
*Doctor Tromp giving a Lesson to his Pupils*

There were a hundred and fifty pictures, all varnished and dusted; a few had green curtains over them, not to be raised in the presence of the young person.

The artist stood with limp arms and a gaping mouth, without a word on his lips, as he recognized in this gallery half his own works; he, He was Rubens, Paul Potter, Mieris, Metzu, Gerard Dow! He alone was twenty great masters!

"What is the matter? you look pale."

"Daughter, a glass of water!" cried Madame Vervelle.

The painter took the old man by the button of his coat and led him into a corner, under pretence of examining a Murillo.—Spanish pictures were then the fashion.

"You bought your pictures of Elias Magus?" said he.

"Yes. All original works."

"Between ourselves, what did he make you pay for those I will point out to you?"

The couple went round the gallery. The guests were amazed at the solemnity with which the artist, following his host, examined all these masterpieces.

"Three thousand francs!" exclaimed Vervelle in an undertone, as he came to the last. "But I tell you forty thousand francs!"

"Forty thousand francs for a Titian!" said the artist aloud; "why, it is dirt-cheap!"

"When I told you I had a hundred thousand crowns' worth of pictures—" exclaimed Vervelle.

"I painted every one of those pictures," said Pierre Grassou in his ear; "and I did not get more than ten thousand francs for the whole lot."

"Prove it," replied the bottle-merchant, "and I will double my daughter's settlements; for in that case you are Rubens, Rembrandt, Terburg, Titian!"

"And Magus is something like a picture-dealer!" added the painter, who could account for the antique look of the pictures, and the practical end of the subjects ordered by the dealer.

Far from falling in his admirer's estimation, M. de Fougères—for so the family insisted on calling Pierre Grassou—rose so high that he painted his family for nothing, and of course presented the portraits to his father-in-law, his mother-in-law, and his wife.

Pierre Grassou, who never misses a single exhibition, is now regarded in the Philistine world as a very good portrait-painter. He earns about twelve thousand francs a year, and spoils about five hundred francs' worth of canvas. His wife had six thousand francs a year on her marriage, and they live with her parents. The Vervelles and the Grassous, who get on perfectly well together, keep a carriage, and are the happiest people on earth. Pierre Grassou moves in a commonplace circle, where he is considered one of the greatest artists of the period. Not a family portrait is ordered between the Barrière du Trone and the Rue du Temple that is not the work of this great painter, or that costs less than five hundred francs. The great reason why the townsfolk employ this artist is this: "Say what you like, he invests twenty thousand francs a year through his notary."

As Grassou behaved very well in the riots of the 12th of May, he has been promoted to be an officer of the Legion of Honor. He is major in the National Guard. The Versailles gallery was bound to order a battle-scene of so worthy a

citizen, who forthwith walked all about Paris to meet his old comrades, and to say with an air of indifference, "The King has ordered me to paint a battle!"

Madame de Fougères adores her husband, whom she has presented with two children. The painter, however, a good father and a good husband, cannot altogether get rid of a haunting thought: other painters make fun of him; his name is a term of contempt in every studio; the newspapers never notice his works. Still, he works on, and is making his way to the Academy; he will be admitted. And then—a revenge that swells his heart with pride—he buys pictures by famous artists when they are in difficulties, and he is replacing the daubs at the Ville d'Avray by real masterpieces—not of his own painting.

There are mediocrities more vexatious and more spiteful than that of Pierre Grassou, who is in fact anonymously benevolent and perfectly obliging.

PARIS, *December, 1839.*